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NOVEMBER 2011 / ISSUE 62

Interview MOGWAI

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
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OF THEIR LATEST RELEASE

Better Beer

HOME BREW

How free trade means
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brewed beer

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Sexual Minorities

HAN MINI

Cover Model

When will Korea's LGBTs
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"CAN YOU IMAGINE? YOU'VE WORKED HARD, STUDIED FOR 10 HOURS A DAY FOR 10 YEARS, AND YOU CAN'T GET A JOB." - PAGE 24

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-- THE GROOVE STAFF

EDITOR'S NOTE

BY MATTHEW LAMERS



Korea's longest-running expat magazine has sexed itself up. Daniel Sanchez, our talented new designer and creative director, worked day and night to come up with a new look that's both easy on the eyes and easily navigable for you, the reader.

From this month, we've also added the new section Health & Fitness and spun Music out from Arts & Entertainment.

Groove Korea is and always will be a community-focused magazine. Our Music, Arts & Entertainment, Community, Food and Destinations editors are as dedicated as ever to bringing you closer to the community around you.

In November's Analysis section, Mike Hurt and Josh Foreman take a look at people forced to live in the margins of society because of their sexual orientation. John Brownlie and Romin Lee Johnson examine the Korean scramble for success that begins from a child's first day in the classroom and doesn't let up until retirement.

On the occasion of our five-year anniversary in October, Groove Korea launched a new, interactive web site. If you have an event you want to promote, simply sign up and create your event to share with Groove's readers. From next month, check www.groovekorea.com for our exclusive discounts at restaurants, bars and other events that will save you up to 70 percent.

We are your magazine. If you have any article ideas, would like to contribute in any way, or if you just want to say hi, drop us a line or drop by our new office (well, more of a cubby-hole) in Jongno-gu.

Thank you for reading,
Matt

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Analysis

How much do you know your neighbors?

Writer Stephanie Potell has taken a look at the people and businesses in her building. The article chronicles the discoveries she made and will encourage others to explore their own surroundings and make a stronger foundation for their new life abroad.

Read the online exclusive in November at Groovekorea.com or find it in print in the December issue.

The plight of the moon bear

Before hunting narrowed their numbers, Asiatic black bears occupied a swath of land stretching from Japan all the way to France. Now their western border has receded to Iran and they are found in fewer and fewer countries east of this. In Korea, there are fewer than 30 living in the wild.

Read the online exclusive in November at Groovekorea.com or find it in print in the December issue.

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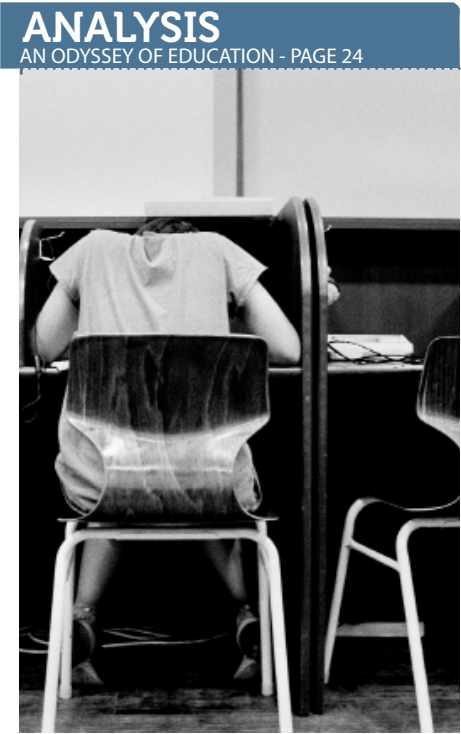
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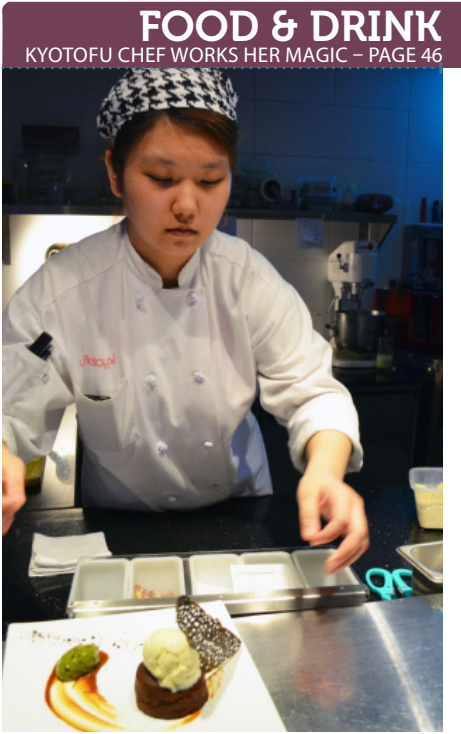
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CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

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Matthew Lamers

Matt lives with his family in beautiful Paju. When not taking care of his children, and sometimes while doing so, he holds the reins as Groove Korea's editor-in-chief. He loves good sushi, cheap wine and fresh air.



Daniel Sanchez

Designer, creative director and singer-wannabe Daniel Sanchez is behind the appearance and high profile of the magazine. He is latino, loves dancing, wide-screen, walking bear-foot and has a weakness for singer girls.



Jason Song

Is a Korean-American from San Francisco, California, with a background in marketing. He came to Korea on vacation, but has now turned it into his new home. Jason has been with Groove since June this year, and has efficiently evolved the way we market.



Josh Foreman

Josh Foreman is a writer and teacher based in Seoul. He believes in sucking the marrow out of life, then boiling the bones with some carrots, onions and celery. He studied journalism at Mississippi State University.



Rob McGovern

Rob McGovern has been all around from LA to Japan but he is yet to find a place with free parking quite like Cwmbran, his home town. A Welsh Liverpool fan, he arrived in Korea in 2006 as an English teacher but has since moved into the wonderful world of media! He is 188cm tall and was recently told by a taxi driver that he looks like Antonio Banderas



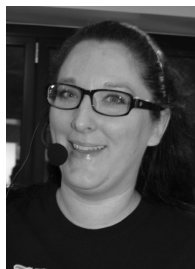
Laine Ritter

A food enthusiast who lived in Japan, Korea, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and the United States. Writing for Groove Korea Magazine has furthered her passion for food, inspiring her to think of innovative and unique ways to present and introduce the joy of eating to others. A New Orleanian at heart, she is a Saints Fan and loves Jazz.



Kathy Kearns

From NYC's East Village, she has been contributing to Groove Korea as a Music Editor. She has interviewed John Legend, MGMT and Korn. Kathy has worked at Capitol Records, Island Def Jam Music Group, MTV and The History Channel. She holds a Masters in Strategic Communications. She has a weakness for DJs, Siamese cats and chocolate chip cookies.



Summer Walker

Summer Walker was a contributor for a year before joining the Groove staff in 2009. A native Texan, she enjoys promoting the active expat community. She's been in Korea for longer than she can remember, but that must be because it's so awesome.

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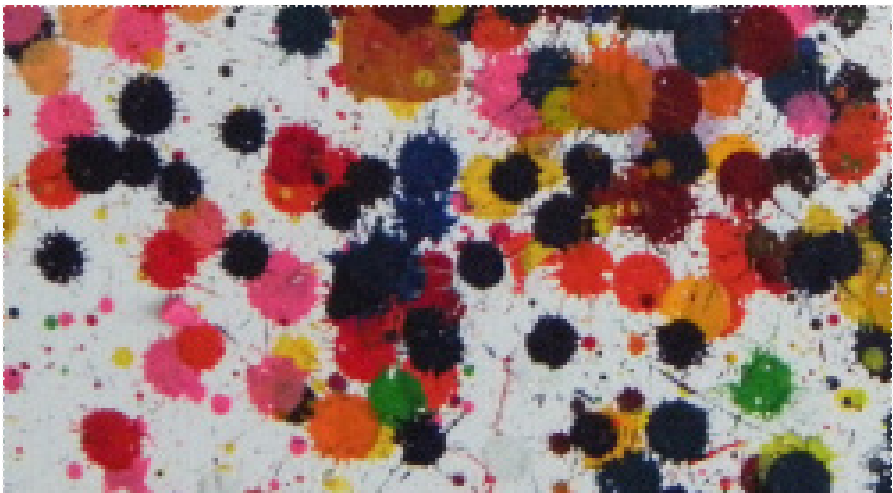
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MARK

HIGHLIGHTS

LOOK FOR THE BOOKMARK SIGN



MOGWAI - Coming to Seoul

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Summer Walker, Groove's music editor, scored an exclusive with Mogwai.

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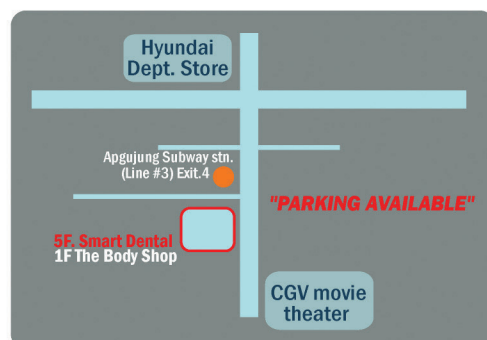
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Upcoming Events

November

All of the events posted below are subject to unforeseen changes.

Nov.
12

*More details in calendar



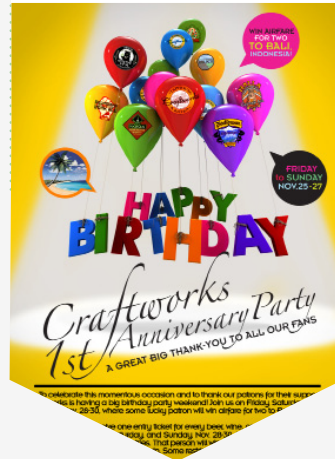
Nov.
17

*More details in calendar



Nov.
25

*More details in calendar



nov.
30

*More details in calendar



THURSDAY

Nov. 10

- Make kimchi for the poor with Itaewon Global Center/Korea National Foodbank @ Korea Stock Exchange (Not a joke).
- AustCham hold Business Awards gala dinner @ the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Seoul, at 6:30 p.m.
- Two Gallants perform in Daegu @ Club Urban.
- Crazy Party Season 7 @ VERA in Hongdae.

Nov. 17

- Crazy Party Season 7 @ VERA in Hongdae.
- Open mic @ Orange Tree in Haebonchon.
- Ladies' Night @ Yaletown in Sinchon (Every Thursday).

Nov. 24

- Bye Bye Badman, Glen Check, 24 Hours concert in Hongdae @ DGBD (7 p.m.)
- Open mic @ Orange Tree in HBC.
- Itaewon Global Village Center monthly movie "Seopyeonjae" @ 6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

Nov. 11

- Institute of Korean Traditional Food cooking class @ Itaewon Global Center (10:30 a.m.-noon)
- Two Gallants perform in Busan @ Vinyl Underground.
- Galaxy Express perform in Hongdae @ Sangsang Madang.
- World DJ Sound Vol.42 : Sidney Samson @ MAKTUM in Busan.

Nov. 18

- Teachers' Night @ Big Rock -10% off.
- Fever Series 36: Sharam Jey @ elune in Busan.
- CPR and first aid training @ Itaewon Global Center.
- Bucket Night @ Beer O'clock in Sinchon. (Every Friday)

Nov. 25

- Miss Saigon musical, Nov. 25-Jan. 1 @ Keimyung Art Center, Daegu.
- Craftworks 1st Anniversary Party @ Noksapyeong.
- Students Night @ Yaletown in Sinchon. Free beer with your burger. Bring Student ID. (Every Friday).

SATURDAY

Nov. 12

- Two Gallants perform in Seoul @ DGBD.
- Royal Asiatic Society excursion "Land of Tea and Exile: South Jeolla Province" (8 a.m. Saturday to 8 p.m. Sunday).
- English tour of "Museum of Sexual Slavery by Japanese Military"; e-mail visits@houseofsharing.org to reserve

Nov. 19

- Teachers' Night @ Big Rock -10% off.
- Fever Series 36: Sharam Jey @ elune in Busan.
- CPR and first aid training @ Itaewon Global Center.
- Bucket Night @ Beer O'clock in Sinchon. (Every Friday)

Nov. 26

- "Erotic Fantasies," an 'International Artists Community group exhibition @ Blind Spot (walking distance from Sangsu Station).
- Thanks Giving dinner @ Big Rock
- Fundraising campaign by SoScuba for children of Bajau and Suluk children (Nov. 26-Dec. 1)
- Craftworks 1st Anniversary Party @ Noksapyeong

SUNDAY

Nov. 6

- Opening reception for "The Emperor's New Clothes" @ Gallery Golmok from 6 to 10 p.m.
- Royal Asiatic Society walking lecture Seoul (9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)
- SAN Rock Climbing Event @ Uiwang City (9 a.m.-5 p.m.)

Nov. 13

- Pitcher Night @ Yaletown in Sinchon (Every Sunday)
- All Day Breakfast @ Wolfhound in Itaewon. All day, every day.
- Cookin' Nanta, open run (www.nanta.co.kr)

Nov. 20

- Yellow Monsters concert in Daejeon @ Insky2 (6:30 p.m.)
- Movie Night @ Noxa Lounge in Noksapyeong
- Big Rock brunch 10,000 won every Sunday.

Nov. 27

- Book club meet-up @ Tom n Toms (near Itaewon Station)
- Boyz II Men concert @ Jamsil Indoor Stadium
- Craftworks 1st Anniversary Party @ Noksapyeong

MONDAY

Nov. 7

- Open registration for Itaewon-Hannam Global Village Center's volunteer program.
- "The Importance of Being Earnest," a play, Nov. 4-12 @ Moon Night in Itaewon

Nov. 14

- Wing Night @ Yaletown in Sinchon on Mondays
- Free business start-up school @ Seoul Global Center (Nov. 14-25)

Nov. 21

- Donate school supplies from Nov. 1- Dec. 16 @ Itaewon Global Center
- Message Mondays @ Sky Wellness Center in Itaewon. 1-hr body message and get free 20-minute foot message.

Nov. 28

- Gimpo Farmer's Day Food Festival @ Gimpo City
- 2-for-1 happy hour @ Bar Bliss in Itaewon (Every day 7-10 p.m.)
- Open registration to volunteer through Itaewon Global Center

TUESDAY

Nov. 8

- Royal Asiatic Society lecture: Author Andrew Salmon @ Somerset Palace at 7:30 p.m.
- Pasta Day @ The Alley Italian Restaurant & Cafe in Itaewon
- Wing Night @ Beer O'Clock in Sinchon

Nov. 15

- SIWA's Diplomatic Community Bazaar @ Grand Hilton Hotel
- Free Seasoned Chips with Miguel Pitcher @ NOXA lounge
- Guinness Day @ Gecko's in Itaewon (every Tuesday)

Nov. 22

- 2-for-1 fish & chips @ Wolfhound in Itaewon.
- Gyeonggi International Ceramics Biennale @ Icheon Cerapix and Ceramix Creativity Center in Icheon (Sept. 24-Nov. 22)

Nov. 29

- Gimpo Farmer's Day Food Festival @ Gimpo City in Noksapyeong
- All-you-can-eat Pasta Night @ Craftworks (Every Tuesday)
- Steak Dinner @ Hollywood Grill only 13,500 won (Every Tuesday)

WEDNESDAY

Nov. 9

- Korean Food Cooking Contest for Foreigners @ COEX Exhibition Center
- Two Gallants perform in Cheonan @ Dolce Bar

Nov. 16

- Quiz Night with Groove @ Craftworks 8:30 p.m.

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Nov. 23

- Sliders Night @ Yalewon in Sinchon on Wednesdays
- Poker Tournament @ Fence in Nonhyun on Wednesdays
- Quiz Night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong on Wednesdays

Nov. 30

- Mogwai performs in Seoul @ Ax Hall
- Open Mic @ Tony's Aussie Bar in Itaewon
- Happy Hour Every Wed @ Bar Bliss in Itaewon



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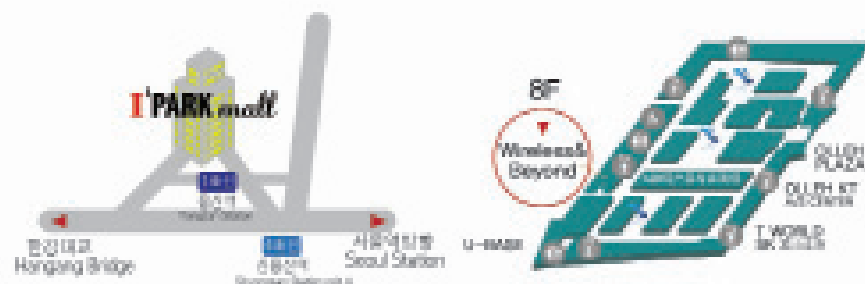
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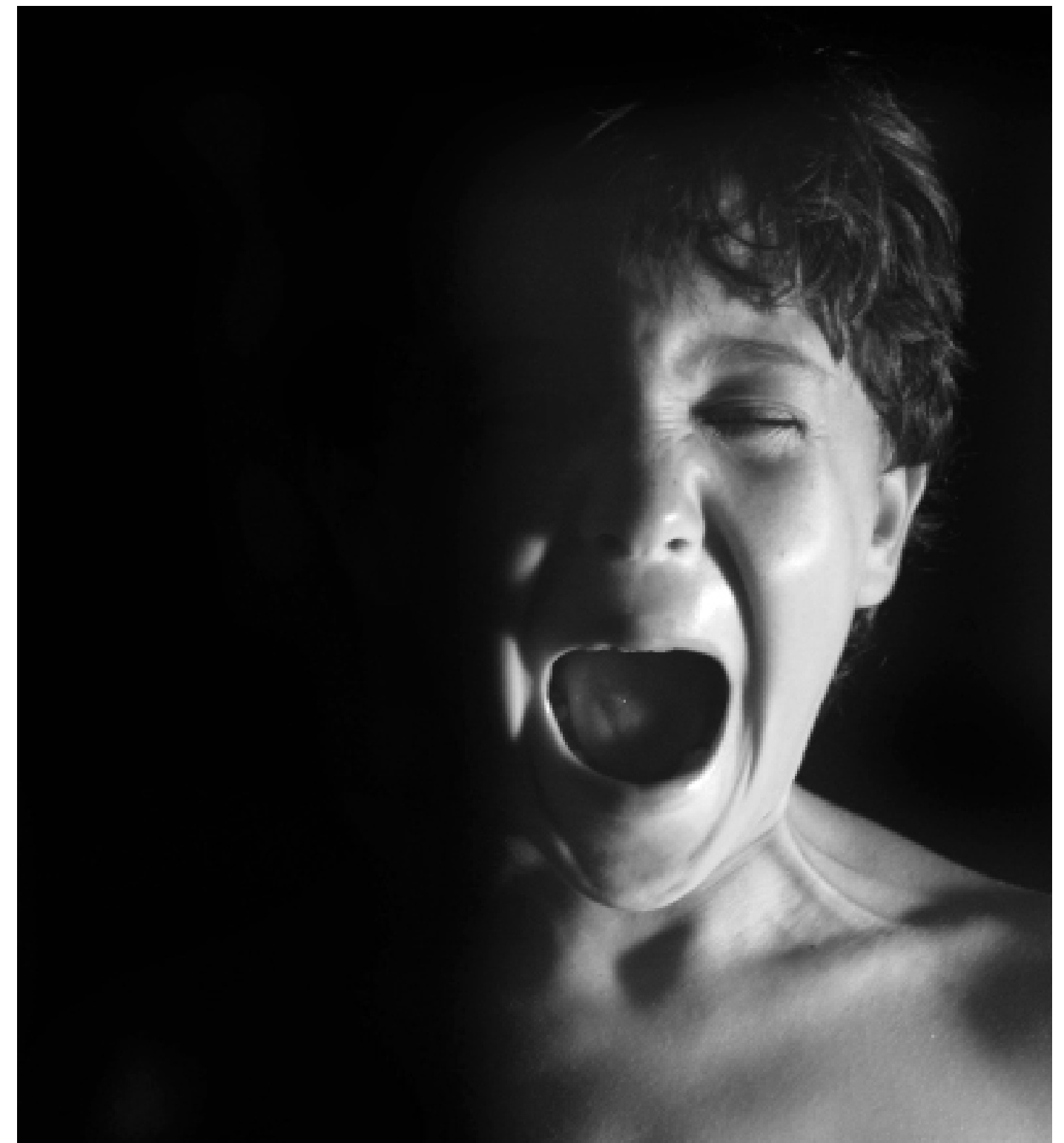
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SNEAK PEAK

President Lee served
sushi at White House

In a blunder at least on a par with the “easy button” mis-translation in Russia and the mismatched gifts in London, Japanese media are reporting that Korean netizens are rag- ing that Korean President Lee Myung-bak was served sushi at the White House in October. Lee was in town to celebrate the long-delayed passage of the KORUS FTA.

NHRC probes foreigner
ban at public bath house

The National Human Rights Commission announced it is investigat- ing whether the human rights of 30-year-old Gu Su-jin were violated. The Uzbekistan-born woman was denied entrance to a sauna be- cause of her skin color, despite being a naturalized Korean citizen. Gu was told that “your appearance is that of a foreigner and we have never allowed foreigners to come in, so it would be against the rules.”

‘Occupy’ protests spread
to the Korean capital

Inspired by the Occupy Wall Street protests and the “We are the 99%” slogan, a group of labor and other organizations have begun the Occupy Seoul protests. They are opposed to the Korea-U.S. FTA and support more regulation of financial firms. They have now held two “99%”-theme protests.

Few prosecutions for
prostitution, corruption

According to statistics, men trolling the internet for illicit sex and corrupt public officials have something in common – few are prosecuted when discovered. In 2004 the arrest rate was 26.6 percent, which has decreased each year. In June of this year just 13 people out of 904, or 1.4 percent, were arrested.

GROOVE
KOREA
NOVEMBER 2011

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EQUAL RIGHTS FOR GAY
STUDENTS DEBATED

A Seoul Office of Education committee recommend- ed that gay rights be included in the Students’ Bill of Rights. The move has come under fire by some parents and teachers, with the chair of the Seoul Association of Middle and High Schools saying that a ban on homo- phobia would “encourage (students) to become homo- sexual.”

The committee vowed to “respect fundamental rights regarding sexual identity.” The Office of Education is in the process of considering the committee’s recommen- dations and will present a final decision to Seoul City Council in early November.

The committee, which on Sept. 7 considered allowing candlelight vigils at schools and loosening strict restric- tions on hair and clothing, added article 7, clause 1, to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orienta- tion. The committee is chaired by Konkuk University Pro- fessor Han Sang-hui.

The committee believes that “there are in fact students confused about their sexual identity and cannot conceal this fact at school.” The proposed revision would also de- delete article 3 clause 3, stating that “students’ rights may be restricted in school regulations, with student participa- tion, in order to achieve necessary educational goals.”

“In our current educational system, students who are known to be homosexual are discarded,” said Han. “This (rule) is in the context of allowing those students to take part in regular activities and is not a judgment on the value of homosexuality.”

Lim Jeong-hun, a lawyer for the Korean Teachers and Education Workers’ Union, expressed support for the measure. “This is a positive proposal to safeguard stu- dents from being ostracized when their sexual orienta- tion becomes known.”

On the other side, Choi Mu-suk, a representative of , an organization of parents, said: “During the teenage years, the line between liking someone and loving someone can become confused. If this proposal is accepted, then we worry that it could lead to problems.”

Park Beom-deo, principal of Eonnam High School and chair of the Seoul Association of Middle and High Schools, thinks a regulation banning homophobia will lead to more instances of homosexuality. “Allowing candlelight vigils and homosexuality in schools is something we are not ready for. Ordinary students could have different thoughts and be encouraged to become homosexual.”

There was dissent within the committee. One mem- ber, who requested anonymity, said: “There were opinions against the inclusion of the clause on homosexuality ... Personally, I think there could be problems at school if students make their sexual identity clear at school.” GK

40% OF MULTICULTURAL KIDS
LACK ANY EDUCATION

Four in ten children from multicultural families in Seoul are not receiving adequate education, a study has found.

Representative Lim Hae-gyu of the Grand National Party, a member of the National Assembly’s committee on education, science and technology, released statistics from the Seoul Office of Education showing that of the 10,041 school-aged children of multicultural families in elementary, middle and high schools in Seoul, only 5,951 (59.26%) were attending school.

The percentage of school-aged children from multicul- tural families who were not attending school was 33 per- cent in elementary school, 47 percent in middle school and 72 percent in high school.

The reason that so many children of multicultural fami- lies do not attend school is that their families are mired in poor economic circumstances and the children do not fit in at school, Rep. Lim claimed.

Schools are also ill-prepared to cope. Last year there were only 63 bilingual instructors capable of helping chil- dren with low Korean-language skills. Even though there are 73 this year, the ratio is one bilingual teacher for every 81 multicultural students.

“The lack of regular education for children of multi- cultural families is related to their lack of acceptance in society, and they are at high risk of various crimes,” Rep. Lim said. “To increase their access to education we must establish ‘multicultural schools’ and expand the number of bilingual instructors.” GK

APPEALS COURT
‘TOLERANT OF GANG RAPE’

Prosecutors are up in arms after appeals Judge Choi Sang-yeol of the ninth criminal division of the Seoul High Court cut in half the sentences of four men that had been sentenced for gang raping a 12-year-old girl.

Saying there is no evidence that the preteen lacked the ability to resist her four adult attackers, the judge re- duced the sentences of the convicted men from six years in prison and ten years of probation to just three years in prison and four years of probation.

The men are all in their 20s.

Prosecutors criticized the ruling, saying that “this court’s decision is incredibly tolerant of gang rape.”

Judge Choi wrote in his opinion that “viewing the situ- ation as a whole, there is no evidence that the victim lacked the ability to resist ... The trial court misunder- stood the facts.”

The judge was sympathetic with the rapists because they said they were sorry and it was the first time they had raped a child: “As Mr. B and the others acknowledged their crime, regret their error, have reached an agreement with the victim and do not want to be punished, and as the defendants are young, this was their first crime and they have no prior offenses rising to the level of a fine or higher, we find this to be an appropriate sentence.”

The men were not subject to a law that criminalizes sex with those 13 years of age or younger because it wasn’t clear if the girl was 12 or if she was 13 with the naked eye. The judge wrote that: “(The rapists), unable to tell that (the girl) was only 12, committed his acts because they did not think she was 12.”

Prosecutors responded harshly. “Gang rape must be subject to harsher legal penalty than ordinary sexual as- sault, so it is difficult to understand the appeals court’s sentence of probation.”

In the original trial, the four men said they had sex with the girl because she was severely intoxicated. The original trial court judge issued a more severe sentence. “Because they confessed that the victim was so intoxi- cated that she could not resist and knew that she was too intoxicated to do anything, I recognized that it was a forcible sexual assault,” the judge had said.

The appeals court judge said that the reason for over- turning the trial court was that “it had been six hours since (the girl) had become intoxicated and arrived at the motel on the back seat of the motorcycle of her male assailant, so we sentenced them to probation.” GK

U.S. SOLDIER ACCUSED
OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

A U.S. soldier in Dongducheon has been accused of sexually assaulting a high school student as she was studying for university entrance exams. Korean authori- ties are either so eager to prosecute or so confident of the evidence that they are bringing the indictment a week faster than normal.

On Oct. 1 an arrest warrant was issued for 21-year- old Private K, of the U.S. Forces Korea’s Second Infantry Division, on charges of repeatedly sexually assaulting a female teenage high school student.

Judge Oh Yeon-su, the Uijeongbu District Court judge who took the defendant’s statement before the issuance of the warrant, wrote that “the defendant presents a flight risk because of the seriousness of the offense and his explanation of it.”

Prosecutors plan to indict the private 24 hours after he is placed in detention following his handover by Amer- ican authorities through the Ministry of Justice acting pursuant to the warrant.

It is typically five days until detention begins.

Pvt. K is the subject of a Sept. 30 arrest warrant on charges of entering a goshitel in Dongducheon at ap- proximately 4 a.m. on Sept. 24 while extremely intoxicat- ed, encountering the 18-year-old while she was watching television, then threatening her with a weapon and re- peatedly sexually assaulting her and stealing 5,000 won (\$4.40).

Prosecutors requested the arrest warrant just one day after calling Pvt. K, who was then detained by U.S. military police, in for further questioning on the 29th, the same day police submitted the case to them.

This is unusual considering the period of detention typically lasts a week (including the weekend), until the documents have been examined and the defendant sum- moned.

At least one populist lawmaker sought political lever- age from the incident. Democratic Labor Party member of the Dongducheon City Council staged a one-man dem- onstration in front of the Uijeongbu District Court in the Ganeung-dong neighborhood. GK

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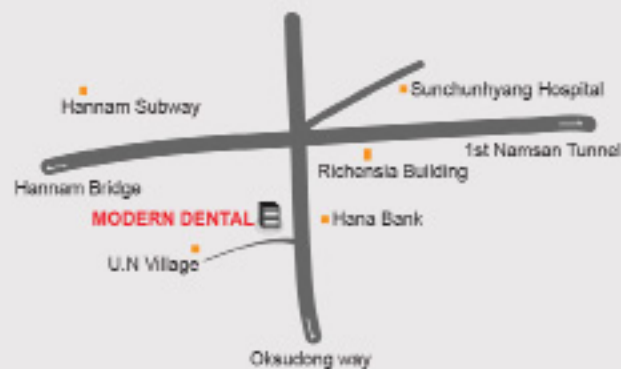
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STEPSON SLAYING LANDS WOMAN ONLY 4 YEARS

An appeals court has sentenced a woman to a short stint in prison for kicking her 6-year-old stepson to death. The biological father received probation for neglecting the child.

Judge Ahn Yeong-jin of the Seoul High Courts' fifth criminal division dished out a four year term to the 34-year-old woman. Her husband, 33, was sentenced to one year in prison and two years of probation on charges of neglect.

The judge explained the sentence: "Rather than taking care of her stepson, she kicked him to death; a very terrible crime ... (the biological mother) wants the stepmother to be punished."

However, the judge credits the child murderer for "recognizing her fault."

"The court takes into account that (the 34-year-old) is currently attending classes on single parenting while in prison ... and that she has belatedly recognized her fault and appears to have committed her crime under the stress of the new marriage," said the judge.

The couple wed in August and began living together with the boy soon after. The 34-year-old became pregnant but her new husband's family did not accept her and she began having a lot of stress, media reported. Also, she began to hate the boy because her mother-in-law loved him, and her new husband also began to neglect his son because of the stress of his new marriage.

The stepmother began abusing the boy by pinching his nipples if she thought he hadn't studied hard enough. The father abused his son with an umbrella, saying "why don't you listen to your new mother?" it was reported.

At the end of October the woman kicked her stepson in the stomach for studying without her permission, and hit his head against the floor of the bathroom while she was taking a bath. She then finished bathing and told the boy to stop lying on the floor and exaggerating, but the blow to his stomach had caused a cerebral hemorrhage and other injuries, from which he died. **GK**

*"THE COURT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THAT
(THE 34-YEAR-OLD) IS CURRENTLY ATTENDING
CLASSES ON SINGLE PARENTING WHILE
IN PRISON ... AND THAT SHE HAS BELATEDLY
RECOGNIZED HER FAULT AND APPEARS TO
HAVE COMMITTED HER CRIME UNDER THE
STRESS OF THE NEW MARRIAGE,"*

ANALYSIS

To find the latest on expat Analysis go to:
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HAN MINI

Han Mini won the 2010 Miss International Queen Crown
- a beauty pageant for transgender/transsexuals
- as Korea's representative,
one year ago this month.



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GAY-HAN-MIN-GUK

CONFRONTING KOREA'S EMERGING LGBT CULTURE

WORDS BY MIKE HURT AND JOSH FOREMAN, PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF FLICKR USERS URBANTOFU AND SKINNYLAWYER
COVER PHOTO BY MIKE HURT. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YAHAE.

Alex, a 26-year-old gay American, moved to Seoul in 2008. He came from Chicago, a city with a “vibrant and huge” gay scene. Seoul was different. Seoul had no gay scene to speak of.

“Seoul shocked me in its apparent lack of venues, groups, activism, and even internet presence,” he said.

Over the next three years, he learned that there is a large gay population here – a hidden gay population, where most interaction occurs online or in a few confined areas.

Other gay people interviewed for this story shared similar sentiments. The gay scene in Korea exists, but it exists outside the public eye. Gay Koreans and gay foreigners are free to be gay; no one will try and stop them, but they will be largely ignored. They will not be obstructed, but they will not be embraced. The same can be said for bisexual and transgender people, for anyone with an alternative sexual identity.

Scott Brindley, a gay American who lived in Seoul for several years, said about the paradox, **“You’re not closeted, but the gay culture is definitely underground,”** he said. **“You don’t see any couples in magazines, on TV. They don’t even do any spoofs.”**

The blog *kissmykimchi.com* said this about the annual Korean Queer Culture Festival in Seoul: **“You might think that a city of 14 million would put on a bonanza of gay pride that would put NYC to shame. Sadly, gay visibility in Seoul is so nonexistent that it’s beyond down low and more like no go. To the average Korean, gays simply don’t exist so why would they need a parade?”**

But Korea’s is a rapidly changing culture, one that is just waking up to the idea that heterosexual is not the only –sexual. Since the early 2000s, when transgender entertainer Harisu strode into the public eye with a hit TV commercial followed by a KBS documentary, an album, a film role and an autobiography, several other prominent Koreans have forced the Korean mainstream to contemplate alternative sexual identities.

“SEOUL SHOCKED ME IN ITS APPARENT LACK OF VENUES, GROUPS, ACTIVISM, AND EVEN INTERNET PRESENCE”

- SAID ALEX

“WOULD YOU SAY I LOVE YOU?”

A KOREAN AT A GAY PRIDE EVENT IN LOS ANGELES.



A SHY BUT EMERGING CULTURE

Korean society has been slow to accept alternative sexual identities. Even in LGBT areas, few people are willing to speak openly about the issue. Many people approached for this article declined to comment.

One interaction illustrates the skittishness with which some Korean LGBT groups interact with outsiders. When Groove Korea contacted Korea University's LGBT Society with an interview request, the society responded with this unattributed e-mail:

Currently it is our midterm exam period, so we have not had any official meetings within the Society. We will be unable to bring your proposal to our agenda until our next one, which is at the end of this month. We don’t know whether or not you will be able to meet your deadline by that time.

If, given the above situation, you still wish to interview some of our members, you will need to provide us with more detailed information about yourself and your magazine. I hope you understand our position both as a social minority and an official society recognized by the university.

Groove Korea responded, saying that because of deadline restraints, the end of the month would be too late. We asked again if anyone in the society might like to speak about the subject, to which the society responded:

It seems clear that you have not paid any attention to our last e-mail and have no respect or professionalism whatsoever for us. We will not respond to any further contact from you or your magazine on this issue.

Can Koreans be openly LGBT? As much as people point to the two obvious examples of openly LGBT Koreans – transgender actress Harisu and gay entrepreneur Hong Seok-cheon – both actually prove the rule of non-acceptance in Korean society.

In the case of Hong, most people forget that he did not actually come out of his own free will, but rather was outed by a reporter in 2002, who revealed information that had been given off the record. Hong lost his job as a television show host and was the subject of much controversy.

Harisu’s transgender status has always been a curiosity in Korea rather than a focal point for challenging gender identities. Harisu, born male, is now completely female. She has mastered being a feminine woman better than many natural-born women. In the end, she has switched genders, but has not really challenged how we think about gender identity.

Both Harisu and Hong are stars removed from the general population. They have the ability to live well because they are not average people; as such, they have the room to live more as they please. One can imagine how hard it is for the rest of the gay population who live normal lives, who might be schoolteachers, mail carriers, doctors, or other everyday people.

LGBT AND FOREIGN IN SEOUL

For LGBT expats, Seoul is at once freeing and confining.

Some benefits for LGBT foreigners in Korea that LGBT Koreans don’t enjoy include freedom from family pressure.

“Foreigners have it much easier [than LGBT Koreans] because of lack of family pressure,” Alex said. **“Being 8,000 miles away from your family in your 20s obviously is easier than living at home with your mother and father until you are in your 30s or married ”.**

“Gay Koreans have a much more difficult time being gay and participating. Family and societal pressures are immense, I imagine.”

Brindley said he dated a Korean for two years while he was living in Seoul. His boyfriend never told his parents he was gay. **“It’s something Koreans don’t do,”** he said.

Brindley also described the constraints of being in a same-sex relationship in Korea. When he and his boyfriend were in public, they were friends. **“He was comfortable with it, he knew he was gay, but there was no PDA.”** They weren’t in a romantic relationship again until they were behind closed doors.

Sean, a 21-year-old gay American, said Korean ideas about masculinity weren’t as strict as Western ones. **“As far as mannerisms and dress goes, it’s not so much you have to worry about that. Here the guys wear murses. It’s more freeing if a guy wants to wear makeup or fancy shoes.”**

Sean doesn’t hide his sexuality here; he’s told his Korean coworkers he is gay. Their reactions were mostly ones of curiosity. **“[They were] like, ‘I don’t know any gay people. Is this true? Is this true?’ I’m open to that – to opening their eyes.”**

Sean said he is **“most definitely”** out in Korea. **“You can live out if you choose to. There’s a community here. It’s not that big a deal.”**

But for Koreans, it isn’t such a simple decision. Sean said he has a Korean friend in the United States who is gay, a fact his mother will not acknowledge. **“She doesn’t believe it’s a real thing.”**

Alex said that failure to acknowledge alternative sexual orientations can have terrible effects.

“Probably the most shocking thing about the scene is how dangerous and aggressive and deceitful it can be. I think it’s obvious to anyone: If you are hated for who you are, made to hide who you love, and even made to repress your sexuality, when you are finally able to express yourself, you’re going to throw caution to the wind and probably make some bad decisions. It can potentially be a bad situation for everyone involved.”

➔ CONTINUES ON PAGE 23



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.....LESBOS

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S OLDEST GAY
BARS IS IN SINCHON, SEOUL.



....."HOMO HILL"

THIS AREA OF ITAEWON, KNOWN AS "HOMO HILL," IS THE CENTER
OF LGBT CULTURE IN KOREA.

"KOREA'S #1 GAYBOURHOOD"

The research for this article started in the gay center of Seoul, or as queerkorea.weebly.com describes it, "Korea's #1 gaybourhood," Itaewon. The gay scene in Itaewon centers on a small area known as "Homo Hill." Itaewon has always carried a stigma for most Koreans, who think of it as a place of danger – dangerous foreign culture, dangerous foreign people, and dangerous soldiers/occupiers. Its reputation is unearned if statistics and data are anything to go by, but is kept alive by fear of the Other, overblown rumors, and a tendency to sometimes associate foreign influences with negative things. It is telling that as the gay culture has grown over the past two decades, out of the former center in Jongno near Nagweon Market to its present location in Itaewon, the only possible and safe place for sexual minorities to gather remains a place many Koreans try to avoid.

Korea's first confrontation with gay issues began in the 80's, when AIDS was negatively associated with foreigners and homosexuality. The only Koreans who were gay, in many people's minds, were those who had experienced too much foreign culture. One must remember this when considering the issue of Korean homophobia; in their minds, being gay was associated with Western-style clothing, fashion shows and pop culture.

Sean has two words to describe Itaewon's gay district: too small. He did say it was nice to visit the area, though. **"I felt like I didn't have to be on my toes so much,"** he said. **"It was the one area where I didn't have to hide anything."**


In this way, if any prominent Koreans do come out of the closet soon, it will probably be in the field of fashion or the arts, since this is where society would expect them to be found, on the fringes, associated with foreignness, and where people can go against convention. Unfortunately, the real problem is that society as a whole just isn't quite ready for that yet.

So it goes for Han Mini, our cover model, who won the 2010 Miss International Queen Crown as Korea's representative, beating out the other top two contenders, from Japan and the United States. Usually, when a Korean becomes No. 1 at even the smallest thing, wherever they are in the world, in whatever field, it is top news in Korea. But in the case of gender and sexuality, the reaction is mixed. There were no national accolades, but mere perfunctory coverage, mostly as a novelty news item.

When it comes to the sticky subject of gender, or challenging gender roles, that is still too uncomfortable to fit into the standard form of national pride.

Indeed, Margaret Cho, who is easily the most famous Korean American comedian there ever was in the U.S., and who was the first Asian American to land a major network sitcom, was too much of a hot potato to become a Korean media darling. It wasn't that long ago that she was more famous than Pak Seri, Sandra Oh, and Kim Yuna put together, to Americans. Perhaps her raunchy humor, which dealt with race, sex, drugs, and homosexuality were a bit too much for Koreans to swallow. But that doesn't make her any less famous, or culturally significant.

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE HOLD?

Some say Korea becomes a different society every 10 years. Indeed, some outsiders and Koreans who have lived overseas remark that the social atmosphere is similar to that of America's decades ago, when coming out was unimaginable, tantamount to social suicide. By the 1980s, it was becoming acceptable to do. Korea is a society in which something unimaginable only five years prior becomes the custom of the day. 

A VERSION OF THIS STORY ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN YAHAE (YAHAE.WORDPRESS.COM). THE PHOTOS HAVE BEEN REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YAHAE. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HERE DO NOT REPRESENT THOSE OF GROOVE KOREA. - ED.

EDUCATIONAL ODYSSEY

OF THE KOREAN STUDENT

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROMIN LEE JOHNSON

Sometimes there's no light at the end of the tunnel



ALL TOO OFTEN
STUDENTS GET HOME SO LATE THAT THEY DON'T SPEND TIME WITH THEIR FAMILIES

MOST STUDENTS
SPEND UPWARDS OF 10 TO 12 HOURS A DAY STUDYING.



Life is tough as a Korean student. Most spend upwards of 10 to 12 hours a day studying. Each day, in the early afternoon, the streets are flooded with students as they shuffle their way from public school to hagwon.

Twenty years ago, the educational landscape in Korea looked very different than it does today. Ask any Korean 30-something if they went to a hagwon in their youth, and they will probably answer no. However, by 2008 over 70,000 hagwon were in operation, according to a report by the *Korea JoongAng Daily*.

In elementary school, there generally isn't much pressure to learn English. As soon as students hit junior high, however, the game changes completely. Suddenly, they are faced with twice-a-year standardized English tests, the results of which help to determine the course of their lives. English taught in public schools typically focuses on reading, grammar and test preparation. *Ha Hyeog*, who worked at one of the top English hagwon franchises in Korea for over seven years, calls this "dead English." Many private academies, like the one he worked for, concentrate more on speaking, or "live English."

"Both have problems," he said. "The first one, (students) go to the real world, a trade company or something, they can't speak English. They can read documents, they can write contracts, they can send emails, but they can't speak English. The other way, they can speak very well, but they are weak at paperwork. In my opinion, in Korea, there is no school (that adequately) covers both problems."

The dilemma has implications for the average Korean student. The government has announced that starting next year, it will bring more foreign teachers into the public school system in an attempt to reclaim "live English" from private academies and address the problem that *Ha* calls "dead English." However, some students and teachers feel that Korea's fixation on English education is so obsessive that it negatively affects students, sometimes with severe repercussions.

Ha shared a story about a former student; a bright, young girl who spoke English quite well. Her English-speaking ability, however, did not translate to acceptable standardized test scores. "She doesn't understand what is wrong with her," he said sadly.

He continued on this somber note with a story from his second year of high school, nearly 20 years ago. During a national standardized test, a student in the next classroom asked for permission to go to the bathroom. She did not return. After the test concluded, the students learned that she had left the school grounds, went to the roof of a nearby apartment building and committed suicide. The test she left behind on her desk was blank, save for a haunting message scrawled in pencil: "I can't see anything."

"(The government) must take care of students and make better ways for academies (to teach)," said one 12-year-old student during a phone interview. "There is no easy."

ONE STUDENT
TAKES AN EXTRA PRIVATE LESSON

The correlation between the enormous pressures of student life -- from school, peer pressure, parents, society -- and its violent, sometimes deadly, consequences is hard to deny. Korea recently surpassed Japan and Hungary to claim the highest suicide rate among the 30 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations.

Most experts recognize the link between the high demand placed on students, which extends into adulthood, and suicide.

According to recent government figures, the suicide rate has doubled in the last decade, which correlates with the booming private education industry; in 2009, five times as many people committed suicide than in 1989. This amounts to an average of 40-45 suicides every day in Korea. While the statistics themselves are disturbing, the average student's response to death, and suicide in particular, is unconcerned. Suicide has become so epidemic that students have become all but desensitized to it.

A 10-year-old student who I tutor twice a week spoke on suicide. Several months ago, after a conversation about the latest Harry Potter movie, he mentioned in passing that a classmate's older brother had committed suicide that week. The matter-of-fact tone could have been used to talk about tomorrow's weather forecast. When asked how his classmate, the younger brother of the boy who died, was doing, he simply shrugged. "I saw him at school today. He is happy."

Walking through Pyeongchon's hagwon row late one night, I stepped into a burger joint to sit down with a group of five anonymous, 20-something Westerners, who I assumed were English instructors. (They were.)

We started chatting about their students, about the stresses of juggling school and multiple hagwon, their otherwise extraordinary work ethic, the incessant pressure from demanding parents. Eventually, the conversation led to youth suicide. One of them related a similar experience with student nonchalance toward suicide. Several weeks previous, eight of his students had informed him during class that they had just witnessed a man fall to his death from an apartment building while they were waiting for their bus. They spoke of it "as if a bird had dropped out of the sky."

Another of the group said many of his students rarely see their parents, and some live with their grandparents during the week because their parents are so busy working. He said that one of his students, a little gem of a girl, came up to him that day and proclaimed, "I'm happy this weekend!" When he asked her what she was happy about, she replied, "Because mom is coming home from Seoul."

The general lack of attention at home combined with the pressures of everyday life translate differently for each student. Some lash out at others with verbal or physical violence, while others look for comfort from their teachers or fellow classmates. Some will find solace in their video games on the weekends and others will spend what little free time they have on sports or hobbies.

A 10-YEAR-OLD
IS ON HIS WAY HOME
FROM A HAGWON AT 2
A.M.

“THERE IS NO EASY”
SAID A 12-YEAR-OLD STUDENT.

Once they have made their way through high school -- as well as through countless hagwon -- the game changes yet again. With literally thousands of hours and years of preparation, a handful of students will be accepted into one of the three SKY (Seoul National, Korea and Yonsei) universities. The English language, that impossible beast that had dictated their lives for so long, suddenly becomes an elective.

As a Korean student, graduating from a SKY university once amounted to a golden ticket for success -- success in one's career, success in marriage and therefore success in life. It seems, however, that this is no longer the case. SKY graduates must now compete with a growing number of Koreans who have studied at prestigious universities abroad, many of whom have genuine English-language aptitude. The Korean students coming home from abroad have been well-trained in both "live" and "dead" English.

"Can you imagine?" *Ha* asked incredulously. "You've worked hard, really hard. You studied for 10 hours a day for 10 years, from elementary school. You've graduated from a good university. After graduation, they can't get a job. Many of my friends cannot get jobs."

He believes that at least one third of suicides in Korea are directly related to education. The majority of remaining suicides, he claims, are somehow related to the perceived loss or lack of success. According to a 2008 story in the *New York Times*, suicide is the second-highest cause of death in Koreans between the ages of 10 and 19, just behind traffic accidents.

"Teenagers usually commit suicide due to education. (Those in their) 20s, it's unemployment. (Those in their) 30s, it's wedding and marriage problems," he deadpanned.

Last year, *Ha* quit his hagwon job and started his own small academy. While, by his own admission, he is "no Che Guevara," he has hope for his students, and the educational system in Korea. He fully intends on keeping his academy small and intimate.

"I feel like my kids are family. Many of them came from bigger academies -- they call them 'English-robbers'. They come here and they say it feels more like a family." **GK**

"CAN YOU IMAGINE?" *HA* ASKED INCREDULOUSLY. "YOU'VE WORKED HARD, REALLY HARD. YOU STUDIED FOR 10 HOURS A DAY FOR 10 YEARS, FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. YOU'VE GRADUATED FROM A GOOD UNIVERSITY. AFTER GRADUATION, THEY CAN'T GET A JOB. MANY OF MY FRIENDS CANNOT GET JOBS."

BY 2008
OVER 70,000 HAGWON WERE
IN OPERATION

THE SCRAMBLE FOR SUCCESS



WORDS BY JOHN BROWNLIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROMIN LEE JOHNSON

For many, myself included, the carefree days of youth were happier times. A time when play spanned from getting up in the morning until the closing of one's eyes at night. That blissful period of life is sadly missing from many children in Korea. From an early age, the youth of Korea are impelled into a highly competitive world.

As with most good parents, wanting the best for their children by making sure that they have rewarding opportunities in life is paramount. With this in mind, competitiveness for success in Korea usually starts from the age of three. Children are first sent to kindergarten – preferably an English preschool – and the extracurricular activities could well be bolstered by additional classes in the sciences, languages, mathematics, Korean, martial arts and music. So that by the time the children start at primary school they already have the accepted foundations for success. However, whilst the child may acquire these advantageous skills, so can all of his or her peers. To be unique, more academia must follow. For instance, schooling after school with evening studies and weekend lessons that swallow a child's precious free time. While not making for the most delightful childhood, this exacting regime ensures that for the parent behind the child every possible base is covered.

The heavy emphasis on education continues throughout childhood. Attendance at private schools working as late as 10 p.m. can call for the use of tablets and caffeine to lever the still maturing mind and body to the limits. The pressure to succeed only grows stronger as they reach their teenage years and as they are on the brink of becoming an adult the intensity reaches its peak.

Before university, in their final year of high school, Korean students nationwide take the "suneung," a monstrous examination that takes place in November and lasts over six hours to provide the results that can affect the rest of their lives by determining the level of the universities that will accept them.

Last year, over 700,000 students took the test at the same time. The pressure was so intense that on the streets around the schools the police expected drivers to keep their foot off the accelerator and avoid using the horn. Planes were diverted so as not to distract the pupils. Meanwhile, mothers, fathers, family, friends and even celebrities all seemingly were as one to encourage the future makers of Korea.

Failing the exam or not getting satisfactory results means retaking the test and also falling behind the pack.

GOING HOME
STUDENTS MAKE THEIR WAY
HOME AFTER A LONG DAY

But failing or succeeding makes no difference to one particular aspect of what growing up in Korea entails. From the age of 18, Korean men are required to undertake 21 months of military service. This may not be as daunting as it sounds as it can be carried out in a variety of ways based on fitness levels and basic aptitude tests. Also, as some kind of vague recognition for each month's service, they are paid 100,000 won (\$90).

It is more or less up to the individual as to when they shoulder their military commitment. Some prefer to do it immediately after the suneung, whilst others leave it looming over themselves as they continue their studies at university. Either way, it is compulsory and failure to report for service can lead to imprisonment.

THE PRESSURE TO SUCCEED ONLY
GROWS STRONGER AS THEY REACH THEIR
TEENAGE YEARS AND AS THEY ARE ON
THE BRINK OF BECOMING AN ADULT THE
INTENSITY REACHES ITS PEAK.

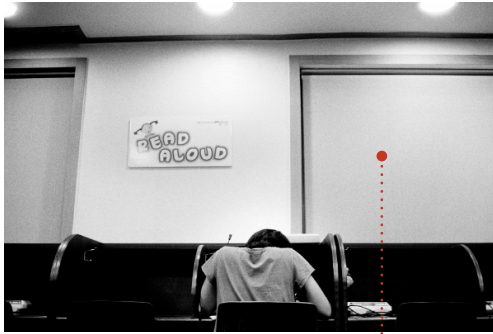
Leaving university a success is, of course, not the end of the story. The next step is moving into a career. The problem then is that over-qualified graduates already saturate the job market, all competing for a limited number of positions.

Should the university graduate be lucky enough to find a job and also a potential career, he or she can now look forward to long bouts of unpaid overtime with the frequent weekend commitment at the office.

Added pressures outside of work include impatient parents burdening their son or daughter with the need to start a family. Koreans are expected to marry before the age of 30. After that time the dating pool normally begins to dry up. And as time goes by, it becomes more difficult to find the more desirable members of the opposite sex or even people willing to date the lone individual who has already endured so much.

But looking on the bright side, with the assumption that a marriage eventually comes about and is consummated, the former student enters a new phase of life for which no exam was set. After the successful sperm cell has won its way through its myriad competitors and fertilizes the ovum, nine months later the young parents will be gifted with a baby or babies. From there, it is important to the now seasoned competitor to provide for his family. In this endeavor, he may or may not be helped by his partner, but no matter what, it means longer hours at the office making sure that the child has the same opportunities as the parents had.

And so the cycle continues. Most probably, ad infinitum. 



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EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION
CONTINUES INTO EARLY ADULthood



I'M LIVING WITH MY MOTHER-IN-LAW

WORDS BY TODD SHARP
ILLUSTRATION BY MATT FERGUSON (INKONPAPER.ORG.UK)

WHEN THE ARGUMENT IS OVER, SHE'LL STILL BE UNMOVED AND YOU'LL BE OUT OF BREATH, JUST HAPPY IF YOUR EYES ARE STILL IN THEIR SOCKETS

Yes, sometimes there's no delicate way of phrasing things and you just have to come out and say them. And among expats here, this revelation provokes the same reaction I imagine receiving if I were to say something like, "I have lupus," or "I've been sentenced to a term of no less than three years in a Myanmar prison." To expatriates, this concept brings to mind the idea of living with every woman of a certain age who ever cut in front of them at a kalguksu restaurant, or of all those times spent on a bus listening to two middle-aged or elderly women dressed in colorful, loose-fitting pants address one another in a tone more appropriate for getting the attention of someone in a different vehicle.

I can see the looks on their faces as these images flash through their minds and feel compelled to say to them, "You know, not all middle-aged women here are like that." Hopefully, they won't respond to this by asking, "But is she?" If they do, I'll probably end up saying something like, "Well, yeah."

Many times they ask how I ended up in this position after I got married. I usually say that the precise details are not important, but it did involve my wife asking if it were possible and then employing an extended period of silence when the original answer was not to her liking. I could've met her silence with some of my own and seen who could hold out the longest, but at some point "Guy Logic" took over. The first law of Guy Logic, as spelled out by one of those really old Greek guys who wore just robes and went around making insightful declarations, dictates that if a woman is not talking to you, she's probably not going to have sex with you either.

That leads to the question of how we manage to stay together. There is a complicated set of principles at play here, far more complicated than mere Guy Logic, as those really old Greek guys never spent time on issues more serious than the meaning of existence and how to live a virtuous life; certainly nothing as complicated as interracial marriage.

They are as follows:

THE RACQUETBALL RULE OF ARGUMENTS

Those of you who've played racquetball know it's a physically strenuous sport that can result in hurt eyes if proper protective measures aren't taken.

Another thing you may have noticed is that, no matter how hard the ball is struck or how long the game lasts, the wall will still be there. In arguments, your Korean mother-in-law is that wall.

Assuming you speak Korean well enough to even attempt this task, or that you have a translator in the house, it doesn't matter what moral, reason-based, or rhetorical case you construct. When the argument is over, she'll still be unmoved and you'll be out of breath, just happy if your eyes are still in their sockets. She has, after all, been practicing arguing with people, most of them food or clothing vendors, for decades and will not be impressed with your neophyte efforts.

The best you can hope for in racquetball is to defeat the other player, even as the wall stands, mocking you both. The best you can hope for in an argument with a Korean mother-in-law is to positively influence how your translator sees you.

TO LOCK AND UNLOCK

Assuming you are still relatively young, you are probably going to feel amorous toward each other at some point.

Unless you can both stay up late, past your mother-in-law's bedtime, this is going to become an issue. It is her imperative to keep every inch of the house clean, and the possibility that there's a spot in your room that's become untidy in the past hour must be guarded against.

This is how she has spent every day, for years, and she's not going to be deterred even if the two of you did retreat in there earlier, close the door and turn off the lights.

To the uninitiated, the solution may seem simple: lock the door. Do that, though, and you're likely to hear gradually louder and more aggressive knocking and perhaps yelling harmful to your concentration and your partner's mood.

The real solution, then, is to let her learn the hard way. The sight of you both, covering yourselves with blankets while her child shouts "Na ga! Bballi na ga!" will teach a lesson words alone cannot. At the very least, she'll learn what the actual purpose of knocking is. At best, this may be the only time you'll ever hear her say the elusive word: "mianhe."

THE ART OF STEALTH HOUSEWORK

As previously established, your mother-in-law does all the chores, and that's just how it is. If you attempt to help, she'll probably push you aside and say you're doing it wrong. I don't care if you take up reading Martha Stewart Living on the subways and in the bathroom; she lives and breathes this stuff and you can't match the pedigree.

However, eventually she's going to complain about how much housework there is to do. Yes, it's a paradox, but she is doing chores for at least three people. The solution, then, is to fold and hang the clothes, wash and dry the dishes, or fold and straighten the sheets while she's not looking. This could be while she's asleep, while she's out of the house, or when she's engrossed in the latest episode of "People Yelling at Each Other" and "Then Staring at One Another in Dramatic Fashion," or whatever the popular KBS show is on now.

If the clothes are put away before she realizes it, it's not like she's going to dirty them up again so she can redo this particular chore, even if you did fold them horizontally rather than her preferred vertical.

Just don't expect a "thank you" for this. A little less complaining is your reward. If all Else Fails, Get a Part-time Job.

If it truly becomes unbearable at home and you can't think of any more excuses to work overtime, tell them you need extra money. Go through the necessary paperwork to change your visa if need be, find some children in the neighborhood to tutor, and do your best to help them better articulate while explaining the most interesting thing to happen to them all day (it'll usually be something along the lines of "The school's cafeteria served pork today instead of fish").

Whatever keeps you sane a little bit longer, or keeps you from being a regular at the noraebang.

Keep these rules in mind and eventually you'll get through. And once you get through, you will look back on life with your Korean mother-in-law with nostalgia as a time when all your chores were done and food prepared for you.

However, a man's home is where he can have sex without telling someone to bballi na-ga from his room. If this isn't one of the laws of Guy Logic, it should be.

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THE LUMBERING ROSE OF THE RAILS
Slum it on the Mugunghwa, a five hour train to Busan

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On the hunt for a cache of buried treasure

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THE BAR
ENJOY A COLD BEER ON THE RAILS.



HITE
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BEERS ARE
AVAILABLE AT THE BAR.

HEART
THE DINING CAR OF THE TRAIN IS ITS
HEART.

THE MUGUNGHWA IS HOW PEOPLE GOT AROUND KOREA BEFORE THE
KTX (USURPER) CAME ALONG IN 2004.

THE LUMBERING ROSE OF THE RAILS

STORY AND WORDS BY JOSH FOREMAN

You won't meet a guy like Rex Song on the KTX, because you won't meet anyone on the KTX. If you so much as speak above a whisper, you are getting dirty looks from your fellow passengers. More than likely someone will ask you to be quiet. You'll get to Busan in two hours and 36 minutes, and you'll get there in silence. The KTX is high-class traveling, and the folks who pay KTX prices for a ticket want a quiet ride.

You'll have to slum it on the Mugunghwa to meet a guy like Rex Song. Hell, you might even meet Rex Song.

We did recently on a five-and-a-half hour ride to Busan on the Mugunghwa. The Rose of Sharon, Rose of the Rails. The People's Train.

The Mugunghwa is how people got around Korea before the KTX (usurper) came along in 2004. When you compare the two side by side, the Mugunghwa has more dents than the KTX, more rusty spots. Its orange and red color scheme seems dated. "Mugung" means eternity in Korean, and true, sometimes a trip on the Mugunghwa can seem to go on forever. But there are tricks to riding the Rose. If you can unlock its potential a trip on the Mugunghwa is more rewarding than a short, quiet and boring ride on the KTX. And the windows on the Mugunghwa are way bigger.

The dining car of the train is its heart. It's a common area, decorated in a style from a past era. The wallpaper inside is yellow and green and brown and looks like a slime monster screaming out as he is being destroyed.

We met Rex there about two-thirds into a trip from Seoul to Busan. He was wearing a slate-grey suit and had that slightly disheveled glow that ajoshis always have after a few soju shots. His hair was swept over, and he had little gold polar bears on his socks. He approached us and began talking; anticipating a drunk fellow wanting to practice his English, we cringed a little. Clammed up. He asked where we were going and what we were doing.

"We're in a club," I said. "The YAC."
-- "The YAC? What's that?"
"It stands for Young and Clever."
-- "Ah, young and clever."

"THE GUYS WHO
NEED HELP OUT
THERE ON THE
STREET ARE THE GUYS
WHO NEED HELP,
PERIOD. I'M NOT
TALKING ABOUT THE
GUYS IN HOUSES OR
BUILDINGS. I'M TALK-
ING ABOUT THE GUYS
ON THE STREET."

I was laying it on thick, feeding Rex fibs to amuse my two traveling companions. Mike, one of my buddies, joined in immediately. We couldn't keep our faces straight. I looked away so Rex wouldn't see my grin.

But he had a grin on his face, too. A knowing grin. We asked him what he was doing. He gave us vague answers, kept talking about the "guys on the street." We soon realized he was toying with us; he was in control of the conversation. The more he talked, the less we knew about him.

"My job is to take care of the guys on the street. Tonight, I'm taking care of the guys on the train."

Taking care of them? Taking care of who? It was obvious he was either a native English speaker or had spent a lot of time overseas. He peppered his speech with "man" and spoke with a slow cadence.



“Rex Song”

“MY JOB IS TO TAKE CARE OF THE GUYS ON THE STREET. TONIGHT, I’M TAKING CARE OF THE GUYS ON THE TRAIN.”

■ □

“See I saw a bunch of guys on the street in Mexico. And I flew to a very different country from Mexico. Puerto Rico.”

God knows why he was in Puerto Rico. He wouldn’t tell us; the more questions we asked, the more vague his answers became. The darkness passed behind the mustard-yellow drapes of the dining car, and Rex’s mystique grew. We found out he lived in L.A. for a while. We tried to find out who the guys on the street were.

“The guys who need help out there on the street are the guys who need help, period. I’m not talking about the guys in houses or buildings. I’m talking about the guys on the street.”

Yellow and white lights streaked by the window, and we could hear the echoing rattle of the track. ketty-whump ketty-whump ketty-whump.

We bought a round of beers and gave Rex one. Mike kept pushing him, trying to pin him down, and Rex kept dancing. Mike flat out asked him what do you do on a typical day.

“You’re getting very specific.”

Howl of laughter from Rex.

“You are not going to like it. You are not going to like this. But that is what I’m doing.”

We went on talking to Rex, and the Rose rumbled on toward Busan.

We had seats but opted to stand in the dining car for most of the trip drinking beers and shots of ginseng-infused soju out of a leather bag Mike brought. That helps the time pass. You can be as loud as you want on the Mugunghwa, especially in the dining car.

There’s a noraebang room plus two arcade games. Even if you don’t want to play, you can spend a good 20 minutes watching the elaborate intro to Tekken 5. Who knew Heihachi had died and come back as a demon?

When Chris and I got on the train in Seoul we flipped our row of seats around so we were facing two other seats. That’s another trick of the Mugunghwa that the KTX can’t match – there’s a pedal at the bottom of every row of seats, and when you step on it you can spin the whole row around. Every group of seats can be a four-seat party square.

We had about five minutes of chatting face-to-face before a woman came on and told us to turn the seats back around the right way, that one of them was hers. Most if not all the people on the train kept their seats facing the normal direction.

That’s when we moved to the dining train. There are plenty of seats in the dining train and like I said, you can be as loud as you want. By 10:37, still an hour from Busan, the train was mostly empty. It started out full in Seoul and had slowly been emptying.

I strolled through the cars taking notes on the people still on. One guy was between cars, bent over at a 90-degree angle, the top half of his body resting on a handrail, his legs still straight up. There were only about 15 people on each car, and they were all pretty subdued.

A few years ago I was riding the Mugunghwa and the old man next to me got a phone call and started wailing. I can only guess that someone he loved had died, because he wailed for a long time. But tonight it was quiet.

Rex got off at Daegu. By this time we were friends, and he was saying maybe he’d ride back with us to Seoul on Sunday and we’d drink the whole way and have a good time. Before he got off the train we swapped phone numbers and he said more vague and intriguing things.


“I got some guys down there in Busan... uh... let me know if you guys need anything down there.”

We thought maybe he was a high-ranking government official, a mafioso, or even a celestial being. The whole weekend we joked about Rex, saying we’d call him and have all kinds of favors done.

Rex did call at one point during the weekend, but when I answered he hung up. I guess either he woke up in the morning and didn’t recognize the new names in his phone or he had accidentally misdialled the number. In any case, it was out of character for Rex. Maybe he was just testing us.

By the time our train was nearing Busan, the dining car had cleared out and even the pudgy guy selling snacks had disappeared into the noraebang room. A big picture above his snack bar looked like an ice-cream sundae made of sandwiches. We paced around the dining car joking and acting like three men who had had a good train trip and had a whole weekend to look forward to.

The KTX does have its place and it is nice to travel the length of the country in two and a half hours. We took the KTX back from Busan; we were in different spirits on the way back and a short, quiet trip was fine for us. But if you have the time, why not take the long way down? You can buy two Mugunghwa tickets for the price of one on the KTX –three if you’re willing to stand. With that extra cash you can hang out in the dining car, eat chestnuts and drink Cass and meet some folks. Rex knew and appreciated the spirit of the Mugunghwa. He told us so.

“You did not take the KTX,” he said. “You took this train. You know why – because you wanted to enjoy it.” 

CONQUERING TIDES

MALAYSIA

PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS BY FLASH PARKER



My charged childhood memories of summer days spent fishing, swimming and exploring the backcountry of central Ontario are a far cry from the wild tropical jungles and lavish sand-scapes of Malaysia's island paradises, places where angel fish tango undersea, sharks and rays rub shoulders with astounded divers and the tangled web of seemingly unending jungle demands exploration.

Differences abound half a world away, yet there is something about these islands, these wild natural playgrounds, that remind me of home. Perhaps this is because I don't do the beach the same way most people do. I never did.

I'm more Jack Sparrow than I am Jimmy Buffett; I'll take a swashbuckling adventure over a piña colada any day of the week. When I was five years old my mother took me on my first trip to the beach. An older boy bet me I couldn't dig a hole in the sand clean through to China. I didn't quite make it, but I knew one day I would show that boy.

"THOSE NEW SPEED-BOATS DON'T DARE MAKE THIS TRIP," I SAY. "IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. IT TAKES A RUGGED, PROVEN VESSEL TO NAVI-GATE THESE WATERS."

I was flipping through a guidebook on Malaysia when I told my intrepid travel partner, Megan, that it was high time to see how far across the sand we could make it. She had two questions for me: **"How bad are we going to get lost?"** and **"What's this going to cost?"** It cost me roughly 70 Malaysian Ringgit. That's how much I fork over to the kids touting swag between the buses at Bukit Jalil.

"Did you just buy a treasure map?" Megan asks as we board a bus headed north from KL.

"So what if I did?" I counter. "We're after an adventure."

"Your map is written on the back of a bus schedule," she counters.

"All the best Maps are," I say. I don't precisely know this to be true. "Besides, he gave me a discount on our tickets."

Megan frowns and adjusts her air pillow. **"Just don't get us lost this time."**



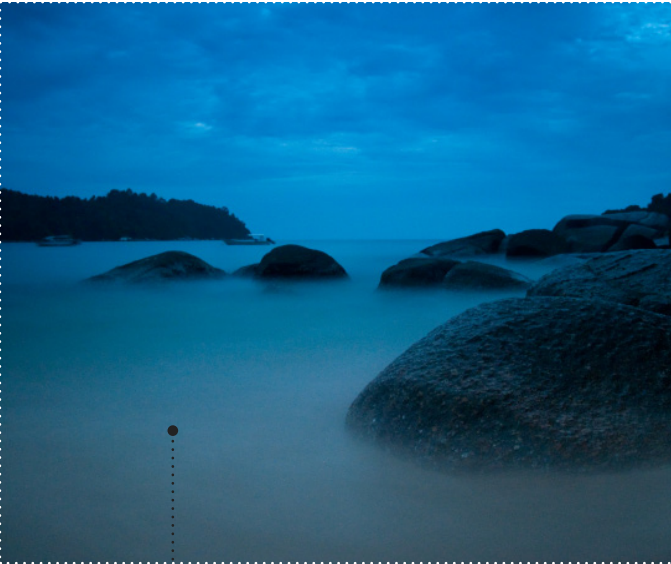
FAUNA
A MALAYSIAN MONKEY



THE BEACH



THE DOCK



THE SUNRISE

Pangkor Island, the forgotten underling of posh Penang, has the power to set free any inner child yearning for adventure. It all starts with the ferry from the mainland; studying my map by what light does stream through the grimy port window I can't help but feel a little like an 18th century navigator, a commander of the high seas. The sluggish ship, surely at one time a tin transport, chugs along at a knot or two. The wooden seats are cracked and stained with salt and saturated with shellfish stink. The first mate is churlish at best and chastises me for chasing fairytales. **"You bought one of those maps, did you?"** he laughs.

Surely he'd attempt to pirate my swag if he knew the truth.

Megan asks me why we're on such a crummy ship when more luxurious options must certainly exist. **"Those new speedboats don't dare make this trip," I say. "It's too dangerous. It takes a rugged, proven vessel to navigate these waters."** Megan frowns and rubs clear a space on the window. A speedboat of a more modern vintage roars past.

"It was fully booked," I plead.

We eventually hit the sand of Pasir Bogak under a blood-red setting sun and wonder aloud just how far we can make it out before the last rays of the day are gone and the jellyfish are upon us.

URNS OUT THE JELLYFISH AREN'T THE PROBLEM; THE TOXIC ALGA THAT AFFIXES TO OUR SKIN IS.

Turns out the jellyfish aren't the problem; the toxic alga that affixes to our skin is.

We're scratching our skin raw as we rush through our hotel lobby. The girl behind the counter laughs at us. **"You didn't go swimming out there, did you?"** she asks, pointing past the cement mixers and scaffolding to what we thought was supposed to be a postcard-perfect beach. **"They're building a new hotel at the north end. People are saying they broke an old sewer line."**

We postpone our adventure in lieu of hot showers and two servings of **"opor ayam"** served up fresh by an Indonesian expat working the hotel kitchen. He stops me from using our map as a napkin and examines it the way I imagine Magellan would have, given the opportunity.

"You plan to find this treasure, do you?" he asks.

"I do indeed," I respond, confident that we are already close.

"To find this treasure you must ride your bicycles clockwise around the island from Teluk Nipah. You must leave before six in the morning if you have any hope of finding this place," he says, poking the map with his forefinger. **"If you do not have bicycles, I can rent them to you."**

Megan frowns as I reach for my wallet.

Despite Megan's scepticism and the excruciating call time I manage to get us on the road early. On our wonky bicycles we navigate the hilly terrain of this small island by the bumpy beam of the flashlight I'm holding between my teeth. We detour here and there to take in what we can of the jungle before we realize our Indo hunger dispatcher wasn't simply being cheeky. The sun is up and it's angry this morning. Thankfully, the map leads us off the tarmac and into the down a dusty dirt path into the bush. We ride, we push and we crash through the underbrush into a lagoon culled from the pages of Defoe. By noon I have an epic sandcastle built and I'm working on a serfdom of sand when a passing hermit crab reminds me of a higher purpose.

"Sure, it looks exactly like the place," Megan says, never taking her eyes off the pages of her book. **"Why don't you go find it?"**

I ask her if my new divining rod looks like it will work. I paid five dollars for it.

"You look like a regular doodlebugger," she says.

I smile. According to the Urban Dictionary this is almost certainly a term of endearment. I am a doodlebugger, a seismic explorer of the highest calibre.

My rod spins me in circles through the bush until I come upon a small inlet where my treasure is supposed to be. I grab hold of the nearest vine and swing out over the water. Miscalculating the laws of tensile strength at a critical moment, the vine snaps and I am submerged. I spend an hour below the surface and come to two conclusions; the first is that the treasure is certainly not located beneath these waves. The second is that tropical fish are impossible to catch barehanded, no matter how quick I think I am.

We return to the hotel dejected. That Indonesian charlatan is feeding his pet hornbill peanut butter and crackers. I have half a mind to tell him how I really feel about him. Him and his little bird, too.

“Let me see that map again,” he says, skilfully dodging my verbal jabs. He examines the map with a raised eyebrow. “Here is your problem,” he declares. “You have been reading this map upside down. The island you want is on Malaysia’s east coast.”

This makes perfect sense to me. Megan’s not so sure. Our man seals the deal. “I can get you tickets at a very good price.”

The Perhentian Islands, some 20km from Peninsular Malaysia’s east coast, have long been a hub for traders en route to Thailand’s interior and a destination for sun worshipers in the know. On a dangerously overloaded passenger ferry departed from Kuala Besut I’m not thinking of how much tea I can move to Bangkok or how to get in on the ground floor of the palm oil industry; I’m wondering where exactly on this island I can find a cache of buried treasure.

A few hundred meters from the shore I walk the plank. Perhentian Kecil – small stopping point in English – boasts some of the finest and rarest coral left on earth, much of it existing less than two meters below the surface. With ill-fitting goggles and a leaky snorkel I investigate this treasure trove, unsure at times if I’m ever going to be ready to emerge from the cerulean depths. On this reconnaissance mission I carry an antique camera and a crystal ball I’m convinced will lead me straight to the mother lode. I rub noses with a cadre of long-beaked coral fish, fog up my goggles when I creep too close to a lizardfish and try not to stick my foot into my mouth or the gaping maw of the tridacna maxima, the curiously named small giant clam. I end my expedition after my camera springs a leak. Nobody told me you weren’t supposed to change film underwater.

I decide I’m through with local lore. If there’s treasure to be found beneath these consecrated waters I’m going to find it on my own. Besides, I’ve been warned. “You embarrassed me enough on Pangkor,” Megan says. “There’s no such thing as buried treasure!”

Suddenly I’m a solo act like Henry Jones Jr. The next phase of my hardscrabble search begins with a scramble over the rocks at Tangung Guntung Laut; I imagine real bouldering is done with more finesse.

After two hours spent clambering over sun-blasted stones I make Coral Bay. I expected untrammelled territory. I get another tourist resort. Curiously, the kids hawking \$10 Bolex watches on the beach look like the ones that sold me my map.

I lay the ragged document on the rock, stare into the sun for a moment too long and deduce that I need to be bearing north if I have any hope of finding this treasure. The compass I didn’t pack isn’t much help so I fashion my own from a needle Megan has curiously tucked into my hat and a leaf I deem worthy of the job. With my bearings about me I set forth, slipping on lichen in my haste – thong sandals were not built for bouldering – and succeed in dropping the compass and breaking the needle off in my foot. It takes me the rest of the afternoon to crawl back to the resort and ten seconds for Megan to remove the needle from my flesh. She will tell you that I cried until dinner time but her report is fraught with inaccuracies.

We regroup over banana pancakes. Resigned to the fact that there may never have been a treasure Megan convinces me to turn my attention to more important things, like sunsets and long walks on the beach. I relent in my pursuit of wild riches as we soak in the vista of the setting sun and wonder just how many crab boats one horizon can contain.

We pop the cork on a bottle of wine. I lay my head on the sand and count the stars in the sky when there’s a tickling on my toes. I assume that this tickling represents a hermit crab exchanging its shell for a new home inside my left foot and I react with the appropriate level of abject horror.

The reality of the situation is no less astonishing; the beam of my flashlight illuminates dozens of newborn sea turtles – of the hawksbill or green variety I cannot honestly say – waddling on tiny paddles towards the sea like an army of zealous skull-capped infantrymen. I consider joining them, for they must have some latent knowledge of the treasure I seek, but think better of it. Theirs is an understanding I can never hope to possess while I’m still not sure which way is north. Not that it matters anymore. I hand Megan the flashlight and start digging a hole in the sand.

“What are you doing now?” she asks.

“I’m digging to China,” I reply. I am closer than I’ve ever been, but it doesn’t matter if I get there. Travel, after all, is about experience, not simply escape.

PRACTICALITIES
PERHENTIAN ISLANDS
When to go?

The best time to visit the Perhentians (and any other east coast island) is between March and October. The eastern monsoon limits travel options during the off season; most accommodations and facilities are closed from November to February. A marine park conservation fee (RM5) applies to all visitors regardless of the season.

How to get there?:

Ferries running throughout the day from Kuala Besut will deliver you to your hotel of choice via one of three options:

Speed Boats: RM70 return/RM 40 one way. Boats seat 8-12 persons. 30-45 minute trip depending on sea conditions. Quick and rough, expect to get wet.

AC Ferry Service: RM65 return/RM/35 one way. Boats seat 45 persons. 45-50 minute trip. Comfortable ride, safe for all your luggage.

Slow Boats: RM300 per boat one way. Boats seat 12 persons. 90-120 minute trip. Comfortable, safe.

What to take?:

Pack for the beach! Bring essentials with you as prices on the islands can be exorbitant. Snorkelling (RM10 per day) and diving equipment (RM70-100 per day) can be rented from any number of operators. Competition keeps prices reasonable. Pack hiking shoes for jungle treks, insect repellent and mosquito nets.

Contacts:

Accommodations range from longhouse bunks (RM20 per night) to private waterfront chalets (RM200 per night) and can be booked easily from Kuala Besut. For a unique experience try D’Lagoon (www.dlagoonperhentian.net), a secluded hideaway nestled in the northern bay of Perhentian Kecil. The bay features magnificent coral reefs, the food is sensational and the accommodations quaint. A short walk to Coral Bay, the best place on the island to catch the setting sun.

PANGKOR ISLAND
When to go?:

The monsoon does not affect the west coast as severely as the east, but Pangkor is still best experienced between March and October. Pangkor is more popular with domestic tourists than international visitors and can feel like a deserted island paradise during the week.

How to get there?:

Ferries run from the private jetty in Lumut on the mainland and cost RM10 per person, return, and depart every 45 minutes. Ferries land at Pangkor Town on the east coast. Taxis to the west coast cost RM12 per person.

What to take?:

Shopping options are very limited on Pangkor. Pack everything you’re going to need for the duration of your stay and bring your bicycle if you can; bikes ride the ferry for free and the island features some of the best trails in Malaysia.

Contact:

The Sea View hotel (www.seaviewpangkor.com) is a great mid-range option at Pasir Bogak Beach and features an exciting array of sports equipment for rent. Pangkor Laut (www.pangkorlautresort.com) is one of the most luxurious resorts in all of Malaysia and offers fantastic low-season discounts. GK





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BY READ URBAN

OVERCOOKED SPAGHETTI. SAUCE FROM A JAR. IT'S A SHAME PASTA HAS BECOME MUNDANE.

I love pasta. I could talk about it for hours. It was one of the first things I learned to cook, and quickly learned to cook right. Fresh pasta was rare growing up. What we ate was store-bought, limp and usually waterlogged. Working in restaurants many years later, I first saw herbs and spices mixed into pasta dough. Once I started making it at home I was able to alter the recipe and find flavors I wanted in my cooking. Black pepper pasta was the first no-brainer. It has simple ingredients. It doesn't interfere with many other flavors. And look at it – pale yellow flecked with coarse black pepper. Beautiful.

The best way to rediscover this starch is to make it yourself and sauce it with simple ingredients. No need to fuss with simmering sauces or drawn out techniques. Good olive oil and one or two fresh ingredients is all it takes to put you back on the road to pasta appreciation. We are focusing on fresh pasta here, folks. Hide the alfredo sauce and put down the dried linguine. They have no place here.

Before we start rolling out the dough, there are a couple of important things to mention. 1. Use good ingredients. 2. Let the pasta rest in the refrigerator before you roll it out. 3. Don't be afraid of flour (it's your friend). 4. Cook it in plenty of salted water.



The key ingredient in this pasta recipe is freshly ground pepper. You should be using freshly ground black pepper in everything you cook, but that is another column altogether. Do yourself and this recipe a favor and get some whole peppercorns. You can crush them under a heavy bottomed pan, or use a blender on pulse to get the coarseness you are happy with (I use the blender ninety percent of the time).

After you have brought the dough together it is important to let it rest in the refrigerator for at least one hour. This lets it relax and makes it much easier to roll out when you are ready. If you were to roll out the pasta right away, it would spring back on you and make your life very difficult. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and throw it in the fridge. You can prep anything else you might need while you wait.

Whenever you are ready, unwrap your pasta, have some flour on hand and grab a rolling pin. Pasta machines are great, and can make the process a bit easier, but I have found that rolling out pasta by hand creates a texture you cannot replicate any other way. I just use an empty wine bottle, so don't think you have to run out and track down a rolling pin. I also always double the recipe so I can toss half of it in the freezer for later.

As you start to roll out the dough, make sure to work in manageable portions; rolling out large sheets of dough can easily become an annoying task. It also helps to have a drying rack so the sheets can hang for a bit before you cut them into their final shape. I am proud to admit I use my clothes drying rack from time to time. No shame here.

RECIPE

BLACK PEPPER TAGLIATELLE WITH OYSTER MUSHROOMS AND OLIVE OIL

For the Pasta

3 fresh eggs

3 ½ cups of flour

½ teaspoon of salt

1 tablespoon of olive oil

1 ½ tablespoons of fresh ground black pepper

For the Sauce

3 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced

2 large king oyster mushrooms

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Cutting the dough can be as simple as folding it loosely on itself and slicing away. You can make it as thick or thin as you want, depending on what you are serving it with. If you are more adventurous, you can try you hand at ravioli or tortellini. It isn't as hard as you think. The fresh cheese recipe I shared a few months back makes a great filling for stuffed pastas. Either way you cut it, making fresh pasta is a simple and impressive skill that will show you pasta's potential.

Put the flour in a bowl and make a well in the center of the mound. Crack the eggs into the well and add the rest of the ingredients. With a fork, beat the eggs and start to incorporate the flour little by little, until it becomes too sticky to use the fork. Transfer the dough to a clean surface and start to knead in the rest of the flour until it isn't tacky and doesn't stick to you hands. You might need more flour, so make sure to have some on hand. When the dough has come together, knead for one to two minutes more, then wrap it in plastic wrap and throw it in the fridge. While the dough is resting, slice the mushrooms and heat the olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and season with salt and pepper. When the mushrooms begin to soften, add the garlic and toss. Cook for one to two more minutes, making sure not to brown the garlic. Remove from heat. Place a pot of salted water over high heat.

After an hour, unwrap the dough and liberally flour a clean working surface. Cut the dough into three pieces and, while working one piece at a time, roll out the pasta until it is the desired thickness. I try to roll it out until it is almost translucent, but still holds together. At this point, hang the pasta to dry while you work on rolling out the other sheets. After you have finished rolling out each sheet, dust them with flour and fold them up so you can cut them easier. Using a sharp chef's knife, slice the pasta into 1 cm ribbons. Toss with more flour, making sure they don't stick together. When the water boils, add the pasta, cooking for 45 seconds to one minute. Drain the pasta, reserving a half-cup of cooking water. Reheat the mushrooms and toss the pasta into the pan, adding enough of the pasta water to bind the sauce. Serve in a large bowl with extra olive oil or fresh grated Parmesan.

TAGLIATELLE

FROM THE ITALIAN TAGLIARE. MEANING TO CUT



· THE MENU

CASABLANCA

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSH FOREMAN

The tiny kitchen at Casablanca in Hae-bangcheon is an alchemist's workshop. The alchemists are Wahid and Karim Naciri, and they have managed to do something that many other restaurateurs fail at: create culinary gold from scratch.

Everything on their menu is good, but their Moroccan chicken sandwich is the best sandwich in Seoul, for a number of reasons. Wahid, 27, knows his sandwich is very good; he is a trained chef, and a deceptively large amount of work goes into creating each one. They sell out every day.

All cooking is alchemical to an extent; fry raw potatoes in hot oil and they transform from something inedible into something delicious with a completely different texture, taste, look and smell. But the Moroccan chicken sandwich at Casablanca is something different. The Naciri brothers have managed to take many disparate ingredients, apply to them their knowledge of traditional Moroccan food and various time-consuming techniques, and distill them into one glorious whole. The final product is unique in texture, taste and conception.



“ WHEN YOU MAKE A SANDWICH,
YOU CAN PUT IN ANYTHING YOU
LIKE ” - WAHID

The sandwich-making process begins long before the sandwich is actually assembled, when Wahid preserves lemons using “sous-vide,” a French technique that cooks vacuum-sealed food slowly in a bath of temperature-controlled water. The lemons provide the basis for the chicken breast marinade. They marinate the breasts overnight in the preserved lemons, olive oil, garlic and a Moroccan spice blend called “ras el hanout.” The marinated chicken breast provides the spicy tartness for the sandwich.

The next step, and what makes the sandwich unlike anything else you can find in Seoul, is the preparation of “makooko,” a traditional Moroccan street food. Mashed potatoes are good. Fried potatoes are good. Why hasn’t anyone ever thought of frying mashed potatoes? In fact, someone has. Moroccans. Karim takes care of this step. He scoops balls of mashed potato from a big bowl, dunks them in a thin yellow batter, then plops them into hot oil. The result is hot balls of mashed potato, with a slightly crispy exterior. And yes, they go on the sandwich. “When you make a sandwich, you can put in anything you like,” Wahid said.

Just as important as the makooda and chicken is the vehicle for them, in this case French bread from a Syrian bakery in Itaewon. Each sandwich comes on half of an almond-shaped loaf. It has many of the same characteristics of New Orleans-style French bread – it's crunchy on the outside, but once you start eating it smashes down and molds to your hand.

The sandwich comes dressed with lettuce, tomato, olives, dill pickles and mayonnaise. The combination of crunchy bread, soft makooda and firm chicken breast is a feat of texture combination.

The Naciri brothers have cooking in their blood. Their father runs a restaurant for taxi drivers in Rabat.

"He might come some day and fix what's wrong," Wahid said. He might not find much to fix. **GR**



WAHIM AND KARIM NACIRI

BROTHERS OUTSIDE →KARIM (LEFT) AND WAHID NACIRI RUN CASABLANCA, A MOROCCAN →SLOW FAST FOOD→RESTAURANT IN HAEBANGCHEON.



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DECADENCE WITHOUT THE GUILT,
KYOTOFU STYLE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN NOEL & WORDS BY LAINE RITTER

MARK

But it's served with a Western twist. Dishes like soy milk cheese soufflés, makkoli with shiso flake sorbet and rich chocolate cake served with soy milk ice cream and miso caramel sauce feature French techniques.

"Soy Milk is used in 70 percent of the menu," said the CEO of Kyotofu Korea, J.D. Yu. "Tofu takes less than 20 minutes to make. This is not rocket science, we just use the freshest ingredients. For example, the Kyotofu savory and dessert puddings are made daily. We throw away any leftover at the end of the work day."

The presentation of dishes is edgy and modern. The savory offerings were bite sized and thoughtfully arranged, bento-box style . The desserts are served on sleek white plates and punctuated with a smattering of edible artwork such as black bean sesame tuile and miso sheets.

For our savory offering, we tried the Dinner Omakase (Chef's Choice) consisting of multiple "tastings" – yubu roll, creamy crab croquet, pork belly marinated in miso, chicken meatballs with ginger-wasabi sauce, prawn and meat sliders and savory Kyotofu.

The mix of Eastern and Western styles provided contrast. Nothing in the Dinner Omakase was too sweet, too bitter or too spicy. Everything was balanced and loaded with umami.

The prawn sliders brought out the sweet solo notes of the prawn between red pimiento chili buns. The chicken and tofu slider was remarkably beefy and infused with an essence of ginger – light but substantial. The chicken meatballs were topped with a delicate ginger and wasabi sauce. The pork belly marinated in miso was flavorful and tender with a slight crispness. As a global foodie, I tasted the real deal in Kyoto when I lived in Japan but I have never tasted anything like the savory Kyotofu, which I can only describe as the essence of savory.

I am not a big dessert fan, and for the sake of my waistline I usually skip it when I eat out. But not at Kyotofu. Dessert here is king. The stars are the signature Kyotofu pudding and the miso chocolate cake. The Kyotofu pudding was delicate, lightly sweetened and characterized by a glossy smoothness, so buttery it tasted as if it should be spread on something.



MISO CHOCO-CAKE

A CHEF PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON A MISO CHOCOLATE CAKE.

PORK DISH

MISO MARINATED PORK BELLY IS ONE OF THE SAVORY DISHES AT KYOTOFU KOREA.

The syrup that came with the pudding was not necessary but amped up the sweetness of the dish. While the tofu pudding was nuanced and exquisite, the miso caramel chocolate cake was a master class in decadence and richness. Miso – normally associated with savory dishes – was given a sweet makeover. The addictive combination of rich and gooey chocolate cake with miso caramel is worth the trip to Kyotofu alone. **GK**

TOFU SOUFFLE

THE TOFU CHESE SOUFFLE WITH CHERY COMPOTE IS ONE OF KYOTOFU'S DESERTS.

TRANSPARENCY

DINERS CAN WATCH THE CHEFS AS THEY MAKE THEIR FOOD.

Kyotofu Seoul is the place to eat delectably decadent food without the guilt. Its menu is centered on tofu, after all. Located in a chic setting with the look and feel of Manhattan, it is the first franchise of Kyotofu, the famed New York City bakery and dessert bar.

An East-meets-West concept permeates the menu. One of their specialties is Western-infused "Omakase," a highly formalized Japanese culinary style that celebrates harmony and the changing seasons by using only fresh, natural and local ingredients in intricate presentations. Traditional Japanese flavors such as shiso (ggaennip), soy milk, miso and mancha (green tea) mingle with French techniques.

Co-owner Anthony Kim, who brought Kyotofu to Korea, said he was immediately struck by the concept when he ate at Kyotofu in Manhattan.

"I have never tasted anything like this in Korea," he said. "When I tasted the sweet signature tofu in New York that was what absolutely sold me. I knew there was nothing like this in Korea and something like this would work here."

SOUS CHEF

A KYOTOFU ARTISAN AT WORK.



Kyotofu Korea is located at Hangangjin Station, Exit 3. Walk about 200 meters and look to your left. It's next to the Hannam-dong side of the Itaewon arch. Valet Parking is available. Kyotofu is open for lunch and dinner. There is a special Brunch menu on Saturday, Sunday and Korean Holidays.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
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SQUID INK

BY PALOMA JULIAN



A FISH RECIPE WORTH ITS SALT

Its ubiquity and low price have made this product an afterthought in our kitchens. At one time it was a valuable commodity; now it's something we are not ashamed to ask a neighbor for a cup of, with no intention of giving it back.

What am I talking about? Let me give you some hints: it is, along with water, essential for living. It's the only rock that humans can eat, and its uses include keeping colorful veggies colorful when we boil them, making it easier to whip cream, removing stains, keeping cut flowers fresh, melting ice from the roads, and on and on.

Of course I am talking about salt.

I'm not writing an essay about salt. It's been done (I recommend "Salt: A World History, by Mark Kurlansky). But I am going to tell you about a technique that we use in Spain for cooking only with salt.

With my editor's permission, our November issue includes two recipes, one for fish and one for pork, using the same technique. These techniques were featured on one of my favorite cooking shows, *La Pera Limonera* (if you can read Spanish, Google them and get their recipes; they are just fantastic.): "*Javier, Daniel, va por ustedes.*"

Technique: On a metal tray, make a bed of salt. Wash the fish with water and place it on the bed, scales, guts and all. Bury the fish with the rest of the salt (you can add some spices for extra flavor; it is up to you), and sprinkle some water on top to give the whole thing a little moisture. The salt is going to create a hard coat that will absorb the fat of the fish and keep it from direct contact with the heat.

When the salt starts to crack or you reach the cooking time, take the tray from the oven, break the crust and remove all salt from it. Serve the meat of the fish without skin or bones and garnish with some carrots or broccoli.

The technique with pork is the same. When you remove the cooked pork from the salt, cut it into very thin slices and serve it with veggies. **GK**

AT ONE TIME IT WAS A VALUABLE
COMMODITY; NOW IT'S SOMETHING
WE ARE NOT ASHAMED TO ASK A
NEIGHBOR FOR A CUP OF, WITH NO
INTENTION OF GIVING IT BACK

RECIPE 1 SALT-ENCRUSTED FISH (OVEN VERSION - SERVES FOUR)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Kg of coarse salt (Sea salt is best)
- 2 big bream or any similar-sized fish (A half kilogram each, more or less)
- Optional: Black pepper, rosemary, lemon.

COOKING TIME

200 C°, around 25 minutes.

SALT-ENCRUSTED FISH (MICROWAVE VERSION)

INGREDIENTS

- Enough salt to bury the fish.
- 1 bream or any similar fish (A half kilogram or so)
- Optional: Black pepper, rosemary, lemon.

COOKING TIME

Max. power, Around 15 minutes



SALTY FISH
YOU CAN USE THE SAME TECHNIQUE WITH PORK

RECIPE 2 SALT-ENCRUSTED PORK (OVEN VERSION - SERVES FOUR)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Kg of Pork.
- 2 Kg of coarse salt (Sea salt, is best) (A half kilogram each, more or less)
- Optional: Black pepper, rosemary, lemon.

COOKING TIME

200 C°, Around 15 minutes.

SALT-ENCRUSTED PORK (MICROWAVE VERSION)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Kg of Pork.
- 2 Kg of salt. (A half kilogram or so)
- Optional: Black pepper, rosemary, lemon.

COOKING TIME

Max. power, Around 8 minutes

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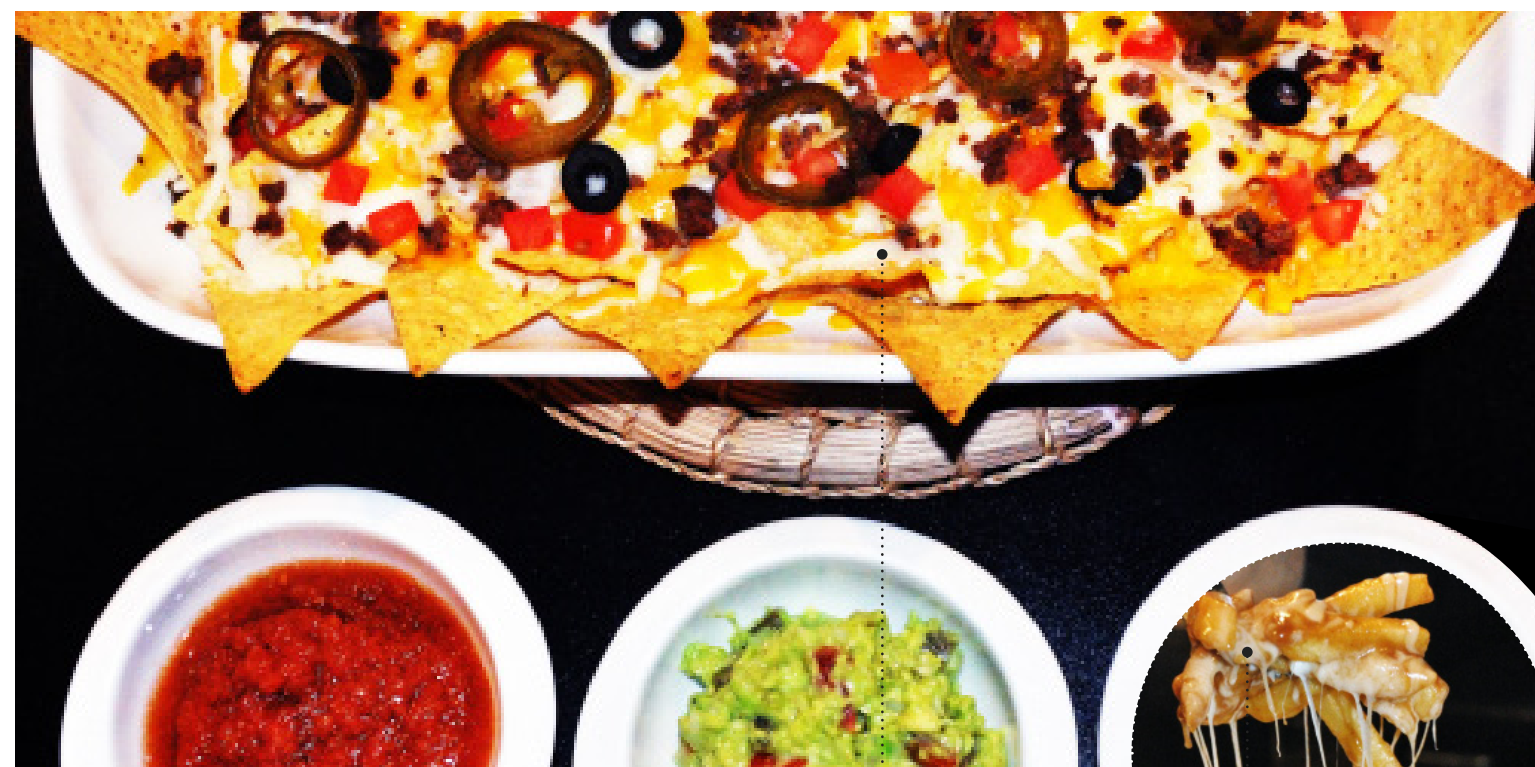


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A COLLEGE BAR THAT'S CANADIAN AT HEART

BY READ URBAN

Around the corner from Yonsei University's gate is Yaletown, a sports bar and burger joint, a place that provides a taste of North America for the homesick international student and ESL teacher. Named after a neighborhood in Vancouver, Yaletown tries hard to deliver authentic North American fare. The Sinchon area is filled with bars, so why should you head to Yaletown? Well, walking into the restaurant you are transported from the hustle and bustle of Sinchon to the familiar feeling of a small-town college bar. It's easy to forget about the tteokbokki carts and mandu stalls outside once you sit down and look over the menu.

Their menu is focused on no-frills bar food made well and cooked to order. Towers of poutine greet you as you enter, reminding you that this restaurant is Canadian at heart and ready to feed all hungry patrons. Dig into a tray of nachos (hailed by many as the best in Korea), loaded with fresh made guacamole and salsa, but save room for the burgers. Yaletown has a list of burgers to choose from, ranging from the classic bacon cheeseburger, to the more adventurous Hawaiian Burger, topped with grilled pineapple and teriyaki sauce. All of the burgers are the same price, so you don't have to break the bank trying that mushroom burger or adding that fried egg that looks so tempting. Craving a burger for lunch? Yaletown is open everyday for lunch with a shortened menu and reduced prices.



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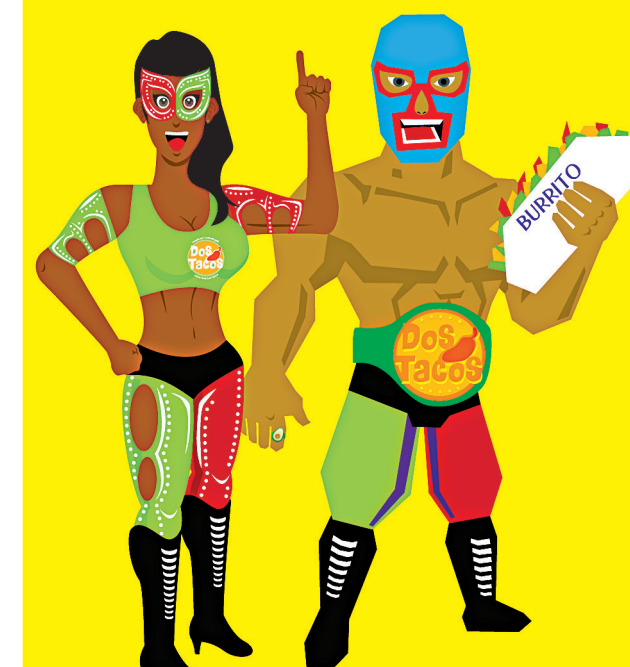
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THE CREW

WHAT'S BREWIN'

| HOME BREW KOREA

BY LAINE RITTER

President Lee Myung-bak is the Korean home brewers biggest proponent. How, you might ask. Well, by personally lobbying the U.S. Congress for the passage of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement ratified by the U.S. in mid October.

What does this have to do with beer? Why should I (or you), a beer lover tired of the beer purgatory that is the Korean brew scene, care? Savings, my friend, as the lower tariffs on malting barley make it cheaper for you to brew your own beer. Don't know how? The good folks at Home Brew Korea are more than ready to pull you out of purgatory into a beer paradise. Your beer oasis awaits as the brotherhood of Home Brew Korea aims to change the Korean beer culture one home-brewed bottle at a time.

Home Brew Korea (HBK) was started by one expat, Robert Titley, four years ago as he took a stand against the flaccid Korean Beer environment. He decided to brew his own beer and established a website to blog about his Korea home brew experiences. "I had been in Korea eight years and the only beers available were Hite, Cass, OB, Budweiser and possibly Hoegarden," Titley said. "I got fed up. It tasted like garbage so I decided to brew my own and share what I know with other expats."

What grew from this was HBK's fourfold vision: 1. Make better beer; 2. Share beer making experiences with others; 3. Partner with craft breweries to change the beer culture in Korea so that beer lovers can thrive; 4. Make good beer generally available in Korea. Undoubtedly boosted by HBK and its members, the Korean beer scene has been slowly changing (although they lay no claim to this).



HOME BREW KOREA WELCOMES ALL BEER ENTHUSIASTS; GETTING STARTED IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK

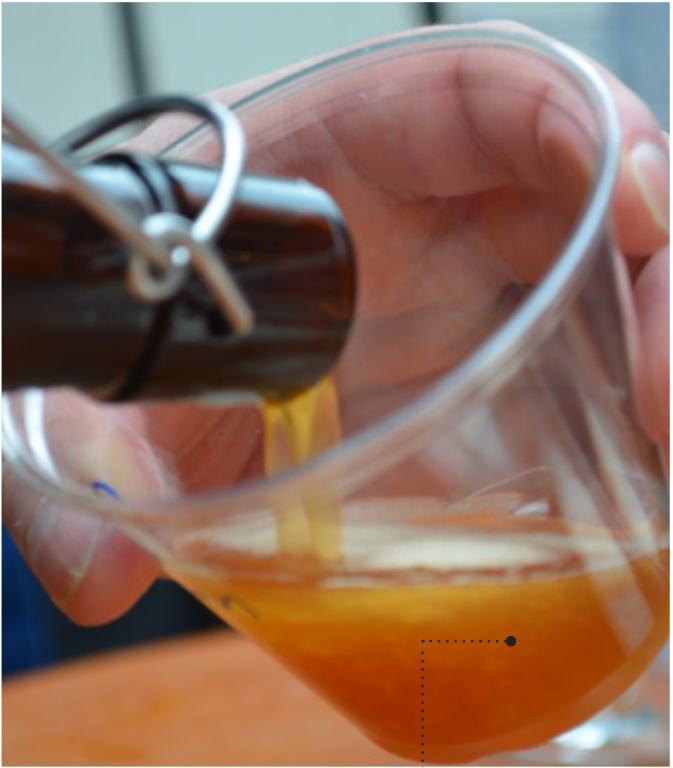
Titley did note, "The bottled beer selection has expanded in E-mart, Home Plus and Lotte, since I started Home Brew Korea but home brew beer is still better for taste, value and to suit individual tastes." (For more on the state of brewing in Korea, refer to the articles in last month's issue of Groove Korea magazine, "The Beer Situation in Korea" and "Wo Gibt Es Hier Bier? E-Mart" at www.groovekorea.com.)

Bill Miller, a member of Home Brew Korea, said, "I really wanted to learn to make my own beer and find people of similar desires. I know that malting barley and grain selection is limited in Korea and the high tariff on malting barley makes brewing your own cost prohibitive. But, for the individual taste and unique value of drinking something you made yourself, it can't be beat."

So how high has the tariff on malting barley been? Up to a whopping 513 percent, but you shouldn't let that stop you from exploring beyond the standard Korean craft brew offering, usually limited to three craft brew types, a weizen, a pilsner and a dunkel. International trade agreements will be making brewing (especially home brewing) in Korea a more economic venture.

As Home Brew Korea welcomes any beer enthusiasts, getting started might be easier than you think. In fact, my companion and I attended one of their events without any beer in hand yet they still welcomed us with open arms. They willingly offered us sips from their efforts which were widely varied in style. Most were surprisingly good.

HBK provides a unique venue for beer lovers in Korea to build a community. Come to an event and enjoy an afternoon with fellow enthusiasts, share a few stories of brewing success and more of failure, eat some snacks and taste home-brewed beer. What a great bunch of guys they were. I was reminded when it came time to go, "you don't have to brew at home to be a member, you just have to simply appreciate what others at Home Brew Korea are crafting." **CK**



A SAMPLE

FOR THE LATEST NEWS ON BEER TASTING EVENTS AND BEER FESTS CHECK OUT THEIR WEB SITE AT WWW.HOMEBREWKOREA.COM

BEER RATING EXPERIENCE: 3 OUT OF 4 STARS
PRICE: DEPENDS ON THE EVENT YOU ATTEND - FREE TO WOMEN

INFO



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AN EXPLOSION OF EXPAT ART

BY ELIZABETH GROESCHEN

“THE KEY IS TO MAKE A NETWORK THAT WELCOMES YOU INTO A GROUP SO YOU CAN BE PART OF GROUP SHOWS IN PUBLIC SPACES.”

The creative scene in Seoul has become infectious. Yet no matter how much artists want to get involved, being an expat artist has its own unique set of advantages and challenges.

“Being in Korea is a good opportunity to build a whole new body of work and to have shows in a country where relatively few foreigners get to exhibit,” said sculptor Jason Mehl.

Benefits can include press coverage of artists’ lives in Korea. However, being an English teacher by day is not always a good thing when you’re an artist the rest of the time. “We tend to be seen as English teachers who paint, no matter where we’re from or what our occupations may be,” said Mike Stewart.

Although materials may be inexpensive, holding an exhibit certainly is not. Many artists even have difficulty finding galleries that don’t require an exorbitant fee to exhibit work. Seoul-based artist Martyn Thompson combats these issues through a gallery database he built, which focuses on galleries mostly in Seoul. Gwangju based artist Doug Stuber added: “The key is to make a network that welcomes you into a group so you can be part of group shows in public spaces.”

One of the biggest artist collectives is the International Artist Community (IAC). The group, established in 2009, now has over 70 members from around 20 countries. It boasts two gallery owner/artists amongst its membership. Project Space Gallery Golmok, directed by Pak Jin-seung provides a beautiful space right off the main drag of Itaewon, as well as art bazaars on the first and third Sundays of the month.

Fellow IAC members, Adam and Jessica Lofbomm founded Laughing Tree in 2008. In this past year, Laughing Tree expanded their physical space and the range of creative work they could share with the community into the new Laughing Tree Lab. “Laughing Tree aims to be a place where creatives can collaborate with others, create excellent work, reimagine what’s possible and inspire others to do the same,” said curator Adam Lofbomm.

Their mission was especially evident in the collaborative launch of AWEH. AWEH (pronounced similar to aware) strives to bring acknowledgement to deserving artists around the world. Like Laughing Tree, they are not confined to one genre of creativity. “Neither are we interested in submitting to high/low labels that would otherwise be used to differentiate what belongs in an art gallery and what belongs in a basement bar,” said Dann Gaymer who co-founded AWEH with South African native, Ollie Walker.



MIKE STEWART
PRINT MAKER AND
PAINTER



AWEH, INDOORS
STRIVES TO BRING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
TO DESERVING ARTISTS AROUND
THE WORLD



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
OLLIE WALKER,
CARL JONES,
JARED KIESSER



SPEAKEASY
AIM IS TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR KOREAN AND EXPAT
RESIDENTS TO SHOW OFF THEIR ART AND WRITING THROUGH
A BILINGUAL, BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION.

Other publications include the on-again, off-again Speakeasy and Concrete Experience. Speakeasy’s aim is to provide a platform for Korean and expat residents to show off their art and writing through a bilingual, bi-monthly publication. Unfortunately it has suffered a severe blow after most of the staff, being transient expats, have left Korea. Concrete Experience is a quarterly journal of contemporary photography and creative writing, providing an alternative to traditional art and literature periodicals. More expensive than an online platform, both print publications are currently on hold, waiting on funding for their next issues to be released.

All too aware of what it’s like to coordinate funding, is printmaker and painter Mike Stewart, who is currently raising money in hopes of establishing the Jankura Artspace this coming spring. Jankura will act as a community hub for artists to gather and work together, an art school, a share studio and a workshop space.

There’s also the Seoul Art Collective, Artists in Korea group, as well as the newly formed Seoul Craft Collective.

“Being an expat always makes you an outsider, for an artist I don’t think that is necessarily a bad thing. It can make gaining acceptance by the established art scene difficult. There are still relatively few expat artists in Korea, although the number seems to be growing rapidly,” said Richard Beaumont, artist and director of the International Artist Community.

CK

?

NOVEMBER SHOWS

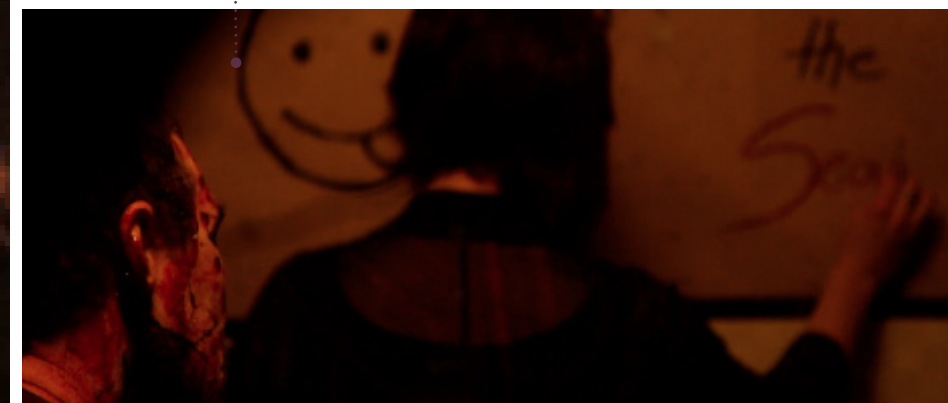
THE EMPEROR’S NEW CLOTHES.
GALLERY GOLMOK, NOV. 2-13,
OPENING RECEPTION NOV. 6 AT 6 - 10 P.M.

SEOLMUNDAE.
WOMEN CREATE. LAUGHING TREE LAB,
NOV. 5 AT 3 P.M. - 2 A.M.

STAIRWELL BUILDING OPEN STUDIOS.
NOV. 19, 6P.M. - 9P.M.
AT STAIRWELL BUILDING STUDIOS, GWANGJU.

EROTIC FANTASIES.
AN IAC GROUP EXHIBITION AT BLIND SPOT
(WALKING DISTANCE FROM SANGSU STATION)
FROM NOV. 26.

FOR MORE INFO REFER TO IAC FB PAGE BY SEARCHING FOR
‘INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS COMMUNITY.’

A ZOMBIECREEPS UP BEHIND ONE
OF THE CHARACTERSSTILL SHOTS
FROM THE FILM

tries to be different in terms of its look and plot development. The zombie's bodies morph, sprouting creepy, elongated fingers and when was the last time you saw a movie where the victims call a zombie on its cell phone as they need to retrieve a set of keys in its pocket?

The film looks great and I was surprised to find out it was only shot on a Canon 555d. It is aided by superb postproduction. While the dubbing of the dialogue could have been slicker, the editing and the creature sound FX are both excellent and are a perfect fit. At times, the makeup effects looked like they were from a film with an exponentially larger budget, not bought from the supermarket. And the score by Brit Scott Benzie is fantastic and unexpected. Rather than textbook pulsating sounds all the way through, he too has chosen to create mood with sinister, yet melancholic music that is emotional and scary in equal measures.

However, if I am being totally honest, as much as I enjoyed the aesthetics of the edit, I felt the film could have been a good deal shorter. This may be explained by the fact that the film initially started out as a short but evolved into a feature. I also wasn't a fan of the overuse of shaky-cam during the film's pivotal action scenes. A steadier camera in places would have shown off more of the fear exuding from the actors, but I guess this will come with time and a budget. I was also unsure as of what to make of the main characters. They are a motley crew who generally hate where they are in their lives and enjoy telling us so. I suppose you would feel slightly aggrieved if you were being attacked by zombies, but you get the impression they would be the same in any scenario. It will be interesting to see what a Korean audience will make of the film, as most of the characters seem to hate the country and see it only as a means to an end, the exception being Mary (Elinza Pretorius), but she is only in the country because her fiancé ran off. A minor point, possibly, but when a film revolves around your characters being chased by zombies, you really need to care if they live or die.

Despite any misgivings I may have had with the film, the fact remains that with a budget of only 4,500,000 won (\$3,950), "Fear Eats the Seoul" is a staggering achievement. With a strong opening, a frantic ending and some tense set pieces in between, the film shows a real eye from first-time director Nick Calder and a huge credit should go to producer Whitney Thompson for getting the film made. Nick remarked that somebody referred to the film as a time capsule of their stay in Korea, and despite the fact the film is clearly written by someone who doesn't want to be a teacher, there is enough nostalgia for expats to laugh along with. Talk of soju as "Korean hooch that will fuck you up" or kimchi being "rotten reeking cabbage" will sum up many a first year here. "Fear Eats the Seoul" will not only be an enjoyable watch for expats, but for fans of the genre in general as no matter who you are, it's good to know that after a post-apocalyptic event, much like cockroaches and Twinkies...Kimchi will still survive.

FEAR EATS THE SEOUL

THIS ZOMBIE FILM'S A STAGGERING ACHIEVEMENT

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE NEW INDUSTRY AND ALINA MYCHKO, WORDS BY DEAN CRAWFORD
STILLS COURTESY OF NICK J. CALDER

A VIRUS HAS TAKEN OVER KOREA, TRANSFORMING ITS CITIZENS INTO FLESH-EATING ZOMBIE DEMONS. THE ONLY SURVIVORS THAT REMAIN UNINFECTED ARE HOLED UP IN NADIA'S (AMBER GREEN) STUDIO APARTMENT.

REVIEW

Most of us have had one of those days in Korea. You know, one of those days where you feel like you don't belong. One of those days where people won't stop staring at you as if you're from another planet. One of those days where you wonder what you are really doing here and what you are going to do with your life. One of those days where you are being chased through Seoul by hordes of flesh-eating zombie demons who have been hit by a virus so bad than not even Kimchi can fight it off. No? Well, you would have if you were a character in the new micro-budget horror movie "Fear Eats the Seoul" (2011) written and directed by Nick J. Calder.

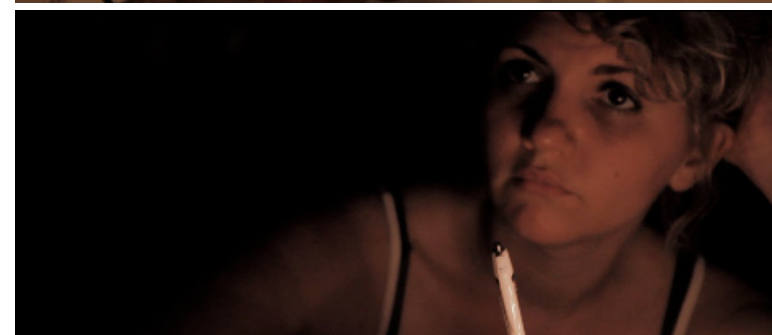
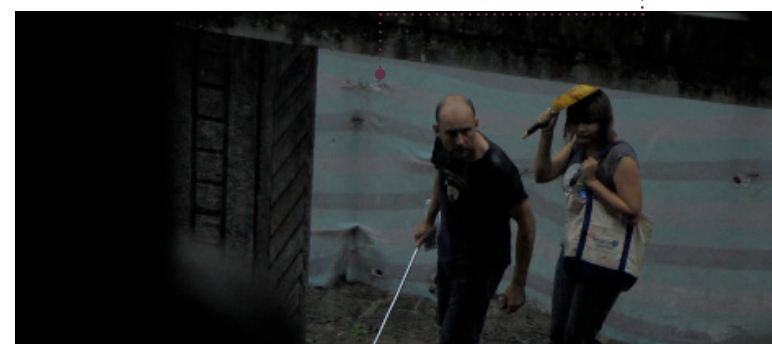
A virus has taken over Korea, transforming its citizens into flesh-eating zombie demons. The only survivors that remain uninfected are holed up in Nadia's (Amber Green) studio apartment, a strange mix who fight about everything and



anything from whether kimchi is delicious to whether they should stay and hide or go and find help.

As they take necessary steps to find food, they encounter not only survivors, but rabid demons and must fight to stay alive. After meeting fellow survivor Su Jin, they learn the world's solution to Korea's zombie epidemic is to drop a bomb on the country, erasing it from the map. From here on out, the survivors must decide on their next plan of action before they, and the rest of the peninsula, are wiped from existence.

"Fear Eats the Seoul" is relatively light on gore and instead ramps up the terrifying mood. In terms of style, "28 Days Later" (2003) is a clear influence as the zombies are fast, strong, angry and purposeful, as opposed to George Romero's more languid incarnation of the monster. However, "Fear Eats the Seoul" definitely



THE INTERVIEW

What would you do if you found out the Korean dream wasn't for you? If you got that uneasy feeling that you weren't achieving your goals and had absolutely no idea what you were going to do with the rest of your life? Complain to a friend over a beer? Shout about it on the Internet, perhaps? Well, not director Nick J. Calder, who decided to project these thoughts onto the big screen in his horror movie "Fear Eats the Seoul," a "zombie film about demons." Nick gave up some of his time to have a chat with Groove Korea magazine about his film, his life and, strangely enough, alternative uses for rock climbing gear.

I met Nick on a Sunday afternoon on the second floor of the Tom n' Toms on Itaewon high street. To my surprise, he had managed to secure the meeting room, which generally has to be reserved. Not really in keeping with his guerilla filmmaking style. But I realized after the interview that it hadn't been reserved at all.

"Do it now, apologize later," Nick says. Ah, now it all makes sense. This is the mantra Nick has lived his life by for the past 18 months, especially during the shoot. Along with producer Whitney Thompson, they decided that the film needed to be in keeping with guerilla filmmaking traditions. "We went into it and we didn't apologize because we were fast and we did it and we ran away!" Nick said.

This piqued my interest immediately, considering that "Fear Eats the Seoul" is about zombie-demons running around the streets of Seoul. I was keen to know of any confrontations with the public.

"Oh yeah, the cops were called all the time," he said with a smile, as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.

He recalled an incident during one of the film's biggest moments in which two of the film's leads are being chased by a horde of demons. The stress was mounting and Nick felt like he wanted to kill himself (his words, not mine).



"DO IT NOW, APOLOGIZE LATER"

Nick explained: "I wanted the shot to be kind of like a crane shot. We came up with the bright idea to use rock climbing gear and hooked it up to a bridge that was right next to the Han River. They raised me and I kept spinning, so I couldn't shoot the scene.

"They finally had to tie my leg and hold my leg in one direction, and all these people started looking out of their windows, and we're trying to shoo them out of their windows, but they're all freaked out, and the police show up and were like 'oh God,' all the demons are waiting in the parking garage, the sirens are going nuts, and they look out and I just go, 'Yeonghwa, yeonghwa, yeonghwa!' I just point and I'm saying 'movie' to them, and they kind of stand there for a moment. And they just drive off.

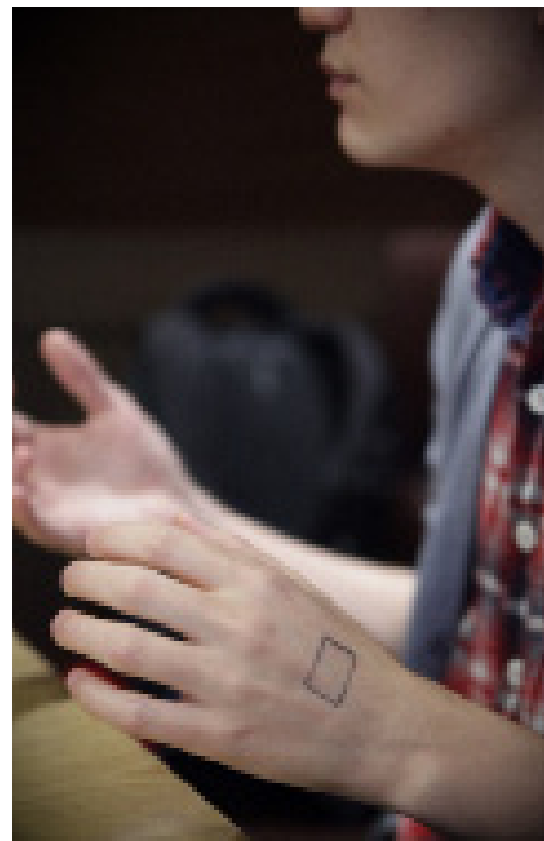
"There was a moment when the rain stopped and it got so quiet and everybody started looking at each other like, did that just happen? And then we just rolled with it and it was awesome and it worked out."

So how did Nick get to this point and what initially brought him to Korea? After graduating from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2008, it was his desire to see the homeland of his mother and a love for Bong Joon-ho's "The Host" that made him decide to come to the Land of the Morning Calm rather than head directly to Hollywood to pursue his ambitions in film. After spending a year here teaching and writing, he finally made the trip to Hollywood. But without any real body of work and a stable contact, Nick found himself in Korea once more.

"What I thought was going to be the rest of my life, ended up not being there," he said. "I was really confused and lost, and it was the first time that I sat down and really accepted that one day I might be 45, living close to where I grew up with a temp agency job because I could never take a 9 to 5. That idea of not fulfilling my dream almost killed me, so I decided to go back to Korea and this time actually make a movie and prove that I am going to be a filmmaker."

While subsidizing his ambitions with teaching, he started work on "Fear Eats the Seoul." As he began writing however, it became clear that it was so much more than a screenplay and had become almost a form of catharsis.

"It was a metaphor for how I felt," he said. "Kind of trapped and isolated and lost because of economic reasons, because I wasn't really in the film industry and just I was discovering my own voice, and realizing I'm going to have to fight for what I want – and that's what the main character has to do to survive the situation."



So with a finished script in hand, he started looking for ways to get the film into production. It came about largely because of his participation with the Seoul City Improv group. They had a huge impact on everything that followed, from finding a large chunk of his cast to arranging a meeting with producer Whitney Thompson. She came up a lot during our conversation and I got the impression that she was extremely important to Nick during the whole process and that they made a great team.

This was confirmed when I asked her for her



"YOU KNOW YOU HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL WITH SOMEONE WHEN YOU CAN CREATE WHATEVER IS IN HIS OR HER BRAIN FAIRLY ACCURATELY."

thoughts on working with Nick and the finished movie.

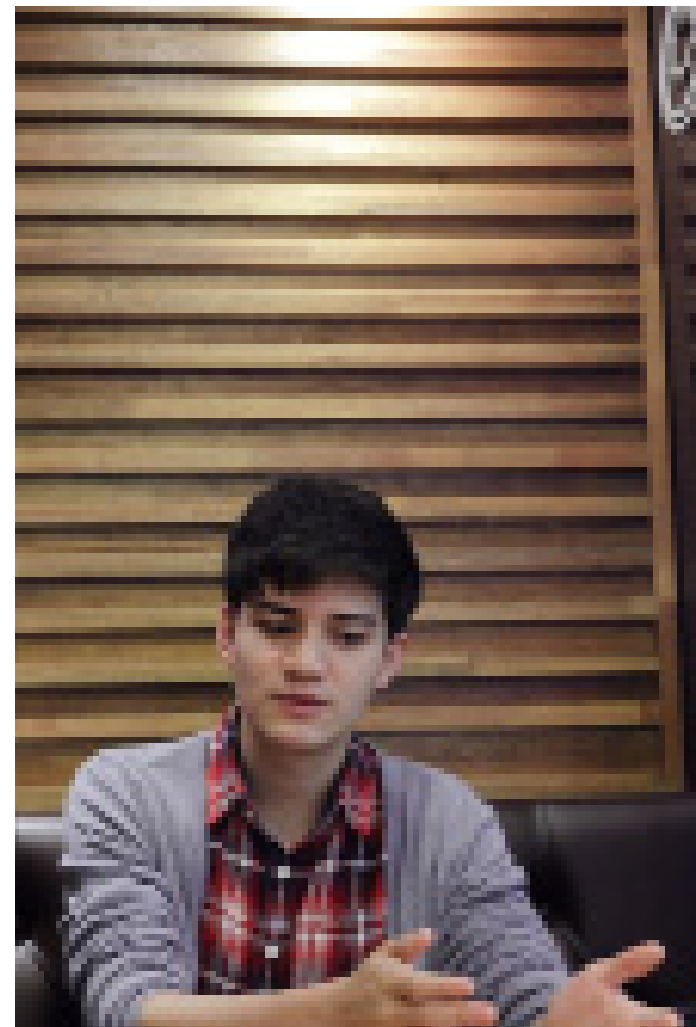
"I loved producing this film. I've said it so many times, but my favorite thing was trying to figure out what was in that kid's head and really

making it happen the way he saw it," she said. "You know you have something special with someone when you can create whatever is in his or her brain fairly accurately."

So, with a similar work ethic and a passion to get things made, the film went into production last August and wrapped at the end of December. With a crew of only around five or six people at any one time, the film was shot on a Canon 550D over 25 days for a meager 4.5 million won (\$3,900). Some eyebrows might be raised at the thought of making a feature-length film on one of Canon's EOS-range cameras, but Darren Aronofsky used the 7D to shoot several scenes of "Black Swan," so if it's good enough for him.

Despite being influenced by other zombie films, Nick said he tried to make an original film and give us something new.

"I wanted to move away from typical zombies and get across how it is when you are infected.





I'm drawn more to darkness," he said. "I don't think you'll feel like it's this totally creepy, scary movie. It's a horror film by label, but there are a few things in it that make it not just your typical horror film. I feel like there's a huge emotional through-line. There's more of this feeling of melancholy than there is this feeling of just dread in it, you know?"

While teaching is the full-time job of many expats in Korea, a proportion of them would probably prefer to consider themselves an artist, a photographer or a filmmaker. But few actually get the gumption to go out and make a short, let alone a feature film, and get it shown. I asked Nick what he thought it was that gave him that drive to get something made.

"Basically, the fact that people were not very supportive," he said. "The fact that people were constantly saying, you can't do it with that camera or it's not gonna look that good or you need this kind of lens or this kind of budget or this kind of crew. Every time somebody said you can't do this or you need to do this I was like, fuck that. I thrive on people telling me no."

"THE FACT THAT PEOPLE WERE CONSTANTLY SAYING, YOU CAN'T DO IT WITH THAT CAMERA OR IT'S NOT GONNA LOOK THAT GOOD OR YOU NEED THIS KIND OF LENS OR THIS KIND OF BUDGET OR THIS KIND OF CREW. EVERY TIME SOMEBODY SAID YOU CAN'T DO THIS OR YOU NEED TO DO THIS I WAS LIKE, FUCK THAT. I THRIVE ON PEOPLE TELLING ME NO."

Strong words indeed. But he wasn't finished there.

"I mean, I really honestly feel like if you really believe in something and you want it, you to have fight. You don't just wait for it to happen," he said. "I feel a lot of people wait for it to happen or they make excuses not to be uncomfortable, but I was uncomfortable for the last three years and it's still uncomfortable. You know, I'm not in a situation where I can relax or anything, but if it wasn't for this kind of situation I wouldn't have been as hungry to get the film made or succeed."

And succeed he has. The film had its premiere on Sept. 19, primarily for cast and crew, and a screening was scheduled for Halloween weekend at Platoon in Apgujeong.

Now that it's all over and he can take a step back from it all, I asked how he was feeling. "Pride" was the first word that he said came to his mind, and he described the film as a declaration of his identity as a filmmaker. But he was quick to point out that this is one small step to him achieving his goals when he moves to Hollywood in November.

"The next step for me is get my first official film out," he said. "I always compare it to music: this was my mix tape and my first LP is coming up."

I asked if he had any advice for other budding filmmakers living in Korea, to which he replied, sporting a huge grin once more, "Listen to no one!"

Ironic to say the least, but I like it.

"Basically, grab a camera and make work!"

I got the sense that he sees his first feature as a rallying call to other filmmakers and creatives alike. The banner he works under is called "The New Industry," for which he has high hopes.

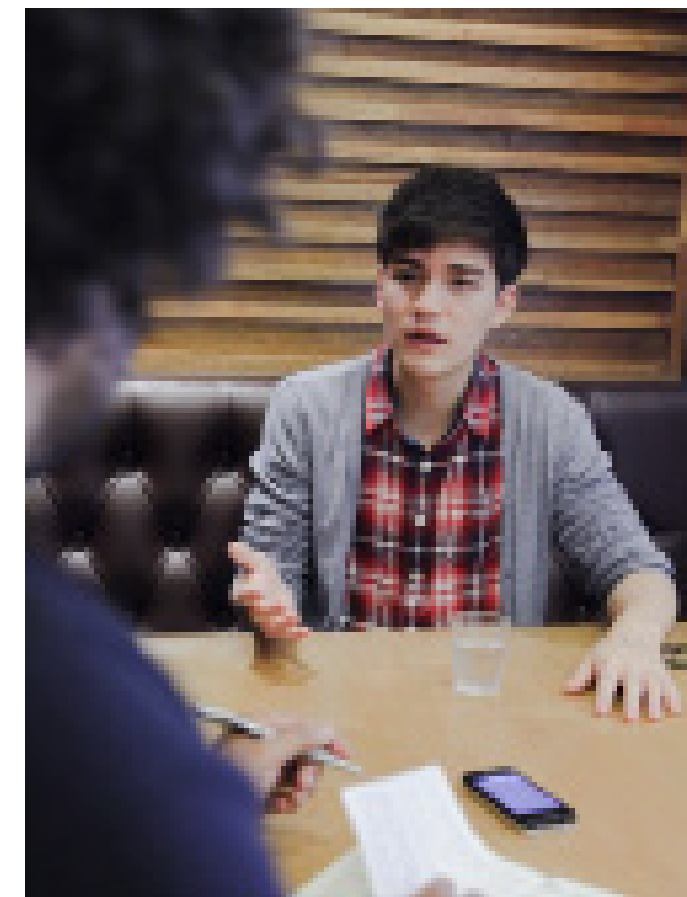
"The New Industry is going to represent, eventually, a group of artists, filmmakers and technicians that I'm hopefully going to push in the right direction," he said. "I just think there has to be this aggressive stance on the future of filmmaking and right now, if you want the big money and



support, you have to make 'Battleship' [the 2012 movie based on the Milton Bradley board game]. The truth is, I don't think we need Hollywood's backing anymore with Kickstarter and all these online funding programs."

With stories shared and advice given, we shook hands and parted ways. Nick was still smiling and full of joy, but behind the smile and inside that head, I was sure there were nothing but brooding thoughts of blood, mutations and zombies. As he said, "I'm dark. I think there is something dark inside all of us."

With the film set to carry on with screenings in Korea, Nick and Whitney hope to enter the film into the 2012 festival circuit both here and abroad and hope that the film will one day become a must-see for those coming to teach in Korea. It might seem a little far fetched to think that a film about rabid demons with blood dripping from their mouths, moaning and chasing people around Seoul, will be a movie that people can relate to their time in Korea. But after stumbling through Itaewon the previous night, I can honestly tell you that sometimes the truth is stranger than the fiction. **GV**



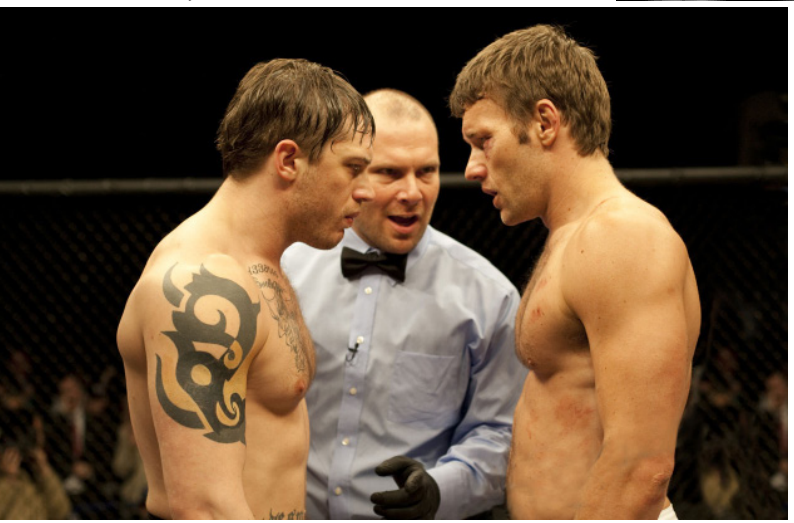
AT THE BOX OFFICE

WARRIOR & MONEYBALL

BY DEAN CRAWFORD

WARRIOR

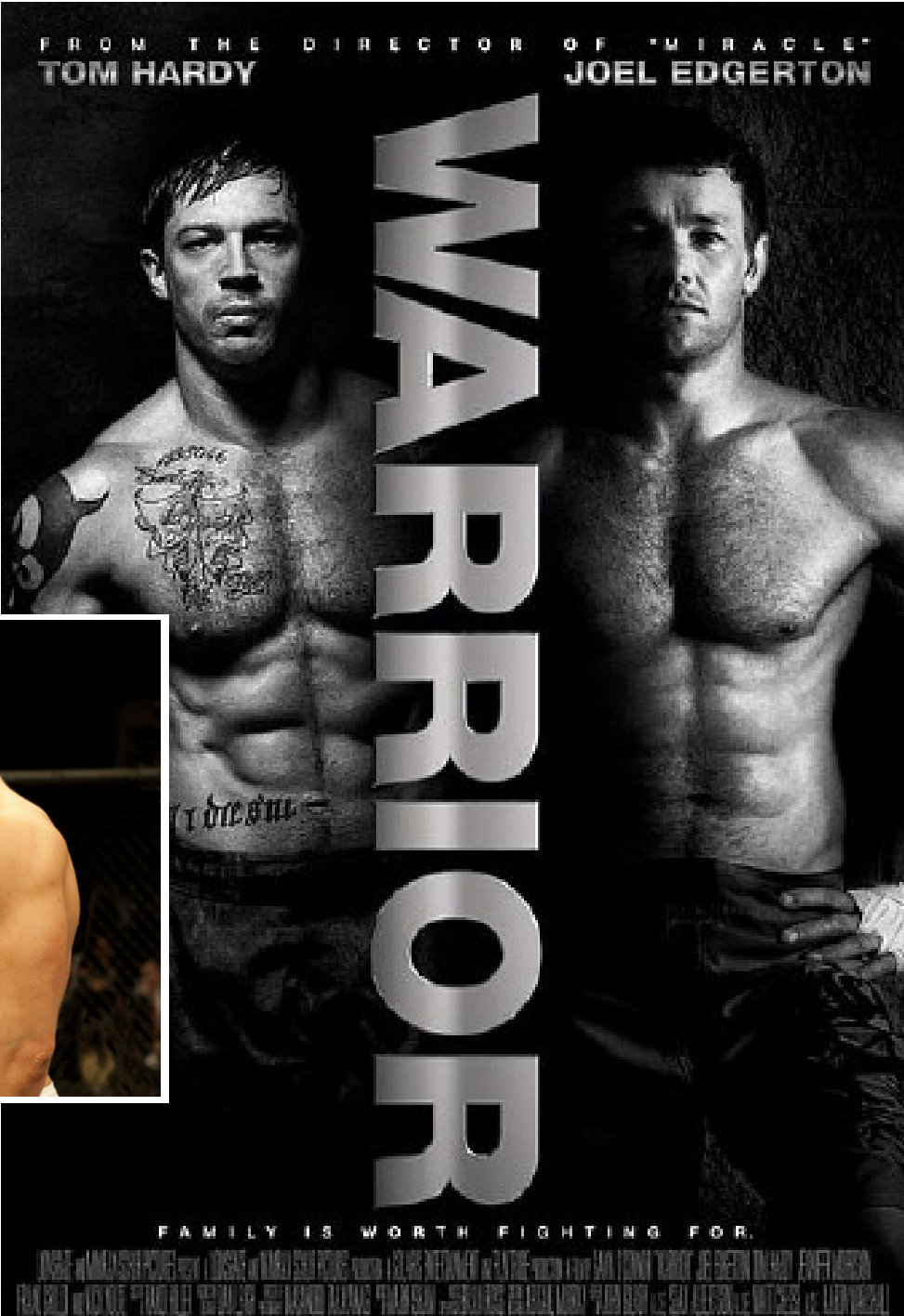
Forget David Beckham and the LA Galaxy, the fastest growing sport over the last 10 years in the US, and indeed the world, is Mixed martial arts. Despite the success of the sport, the same can't be said for the attempts to portray MMA on screen. They tend to be low-budget, straight-to-DVD flicks with one eye on quantity over quality. Titles such as "Never Surrender" (2009) with George St. Pierre and Quinton Jackson, and "Blood and Bone" (2009) with Michael Jai White have minuscule budgets, but the producers know they will make a profit due to the "star names" included. Attempts to make slightly higher brow portrayals of MMA on screen have been made too. David Mamet's "Redbelt" (2008) and the relatively bigger budget "Never Back Down" (2008) suggest, however, that the chances of seeing a good film focused on MMA are pretty slim. Until the release of Gavin O'Connor's "Warrior" (2011), that is, which boasts a solid cast in Nick Nolte, Joel Edgerton and the ever impressive Tom Hardy.



"WARRIOR" PUTS THE
DRAMA FIRST, WHILE
MAKING SURE THE
ACTION IS BELIEVABLE.

"Warrior" is the story of Tommy (Hardy), an ex-marine who has returned home but finds himself lost in his new surroundings. Being a former boxer, he enlists the help of his alcoholic father and former trainer (Nolte) to prepare for an MMA contest that boasts a \$5,000,000 purse for the victor. As fate would have it, Tommy's brother, Brendan (Edgerton), a high school teacher and former cage fighter has also entered the contest. Tommy and Brendan still have unresolved issues from their childhood, so the fights cease to become purely physical as they attempt to battle past demons inside and outside the cage.

What suggests that "Warrior" will be different from your standard low

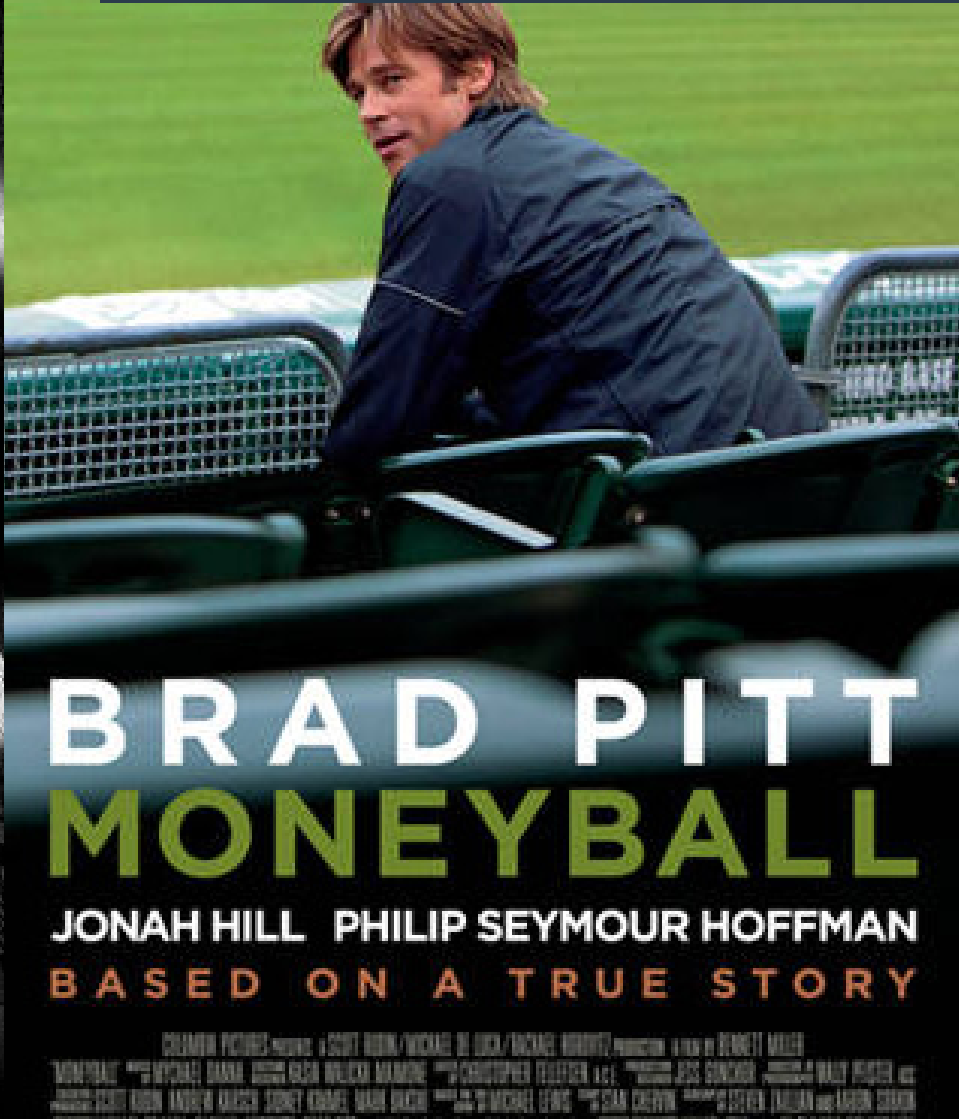


budget MMA fare (the budget was only a third higher than that of "Never Back Down"), is that it appears to understand that a great sports film isn't purely about the sport. If you don't have characters people can relate to, why should they care who wins or loses and what the individual outcome for each character will be? "Warrior" puts the drama first, while making sure the action is believable. And with solid performances from Nick Nolte and another physical performance from Tom Hardy, we could well have one of the best sports films in our midst since "Rocky" (1976). **G+**

BRAD & JONAH
BRAD PITT AS BILLY BEANE
AND JONAH HILL AS PETER
BRAND



HOWEVER, THE ULTIMATE TEST FOR A SPORTS FILM IS ITS ABILITY TO
APPEAL TO EVERYONE AND NOT JUST FANS OF THAT PARTICULAR SPORT.



MONEYBALL

The second sporting film to be released in Korea this month is Moneyball, a film based on a book of the same name written by Michael Lewis. Seeing as Moneyball is about baseball, a sport in which I have no interest whatsoever, you would think that this film wouldn't appeal to me in the slightest. I enjoyed "Major League" (1989) enough, but it's just not cricket, is it? However, the ultimate test for a sports film is its ability to appeal to everyone and not just fans of that particular sport.

Moneyball follows Billy Beane (Brad Pitt), General Manager of the Oakland A's, who is finding it hard to compete with bigger teams that can attract better players due to higher salaries. To give himself a chance of ever winning the World Series he comes up with a "modernized, analytical, sabermetric approach" to assemble a competitive baseball team that can compete with the big boys.

The book was a huge success and the film is having a similar impact with extremely positive reviews, which suggests that it will indeed appeal to a wide audience. A great achievement considering the film almost never came into existence. The rights to the book were bought in 2004, but it wasn't until Brad Pitt came onboard in 2007 that the project took off. David Frankel, who directed "The Devil Wears Prada" (2006), was set to helm the film, but was replaced with Steven Soderbergh. Then days before filming was due to start, Steven Soderbergh was relieved of his directing duties due to creative differences. The studio thought his ideas to interview real life players and to give the film more of a documentary style in places were "nontraditional for a sports movie." Eventually, Bennet Miller of "Capote" (2005) fame was hired to direct the film and the godfather of dialogue, Aaron Sorkin, came in to re-write the script. The film finally went into production in early 2010.

There appear to be several differences between the true story and the movie, the most notable being that Brad Pitt is much better looking than the real life Billy Beane and Jonah Hill's character doesn't even exist. But despite the artistic license the creative team has used, it seems like they have produced a film that will have everyone cheering for the little guy against all odds. Even if it isn't cricket.

G+

KOREAN

DVD REVIEWS

BY DANIEL JOSEPH VORDERSTRASSE



WHITE

THE MELODY OF THE CURSE - 2011/06

K-Pop phenoms intertwine with Asian horror tactics in a psychological thriller introduced to DVD for the Halloween season. Pink Dolls, a struggling group of four teenage girls, strive to strike it rich on the music scene. Eun-ju (Ham Eun-jeong), the oldest member and team leader, is constantly ridiculed for being a former backup dancer and over the hill in the music biz, but controls the out-of-control prima donnas to the best to her ability.

After numerous failures on TV competitions, the girls are presented with an amazing studio/residence after a fire engulfed their previous accommodation, leaving the building a bargain for the future owner. While searching the corridors, studios and rooms, Eun-ju uncovers an old tape of "White," a previous idol group's music video. Relentless and patronizing at every opportunity, the snobbish girls simply refuse to perform the second-tier song and dance until the manager insists. Once on stage, the song is an instant hit, landing the girls fame, fans and stardom.

When a battle for the lead emerges, a competition materializes and deception, trickery and dishonesty ensue. Each arrogant and conceited starlet rues the opportunity, but only one can succeed. Through bizarre twists of fate, each girl undergoes seemingly odd misfortunes and is replaced due to the tragic circumstances. As each debutante fails to clinch the lead, Eun-ju assumes the position, but is weary of another disastrous encounter. As events unravel and the previous group's background is uncovered, a paranormal mystery reveals itself, endangering all those involved with White.

Certainly more of a psychological horror film than a slasher flick, the film contains a corny plot with common horror genre themes. There are the pretty girls being haunted by an eerie phenomenon that humanity cannot control or understand. Containing startles and moments of terror, the film is certainly not the worst horror movie ever produced. Watch it with a grain of salt and understand you are watching a horror film, so entertainment, shock and a couple of scares will be the only results. On the bright side, a catchy tune is included for K-pop enthusiasts. **GK**

MOBY DICK

2011/06

A group of seasoned covert professionals is pitted against a group of mere reporters to prove which is mightier - the pen or the sword. Sharing the same title as Herman Melville's epic novel, the similarities end here between the two. The Korean version of Moby Dick begins on the outskirts of Seoul when terrorism rears its ugly head and Balam Bridge is destroyed in a matter of seconds. Immediately, suspicions shift towards Seoul's unfriendly neighbor to the North as spies are blamed for the cataclysmic event. Unbeknownst to common citizens, a dangerous and secret power is behind the government's daily activities and whenever politically sensitive issues arise, the public witnesses tragic incidents affecting public opinion and support.

Using his connections and a simple bribe, Lee Bang-woo (Hwang Jeong-min) gains an early advantage among heaps of journalists ravaging local authorities for the hottest scoop. Bang-woo discusses the particulars of the events leading up to the bombing with colleagues and certain anomalies divulge. In addition, Bang-woo's hometown pal Yoon Hyeok (Jin Goo) presents classified documents concerning the fabrication of the explosion, shedding light on other recent tragedies. The investigative team of Bang-woo and fellow correspondents Seong Hyo-gwan (Kim Min-hee) and Son Jin-gi (Kim Sang-ho) uncover a plethora of conspiracy theories involving the deeds of the mystical society behind the events.

Containing a sluggish beginning and a somewhat lackluster build-up of events that creates a storyline containing government corruption in every sector of public society, the film is lacking the pace and adrenaline so evident in Korean action cinema in the pivotal opening moments. While missing the thrilling feats early on, the absence is certainly compensated for in the latter stages of the movie. The "mythical" operative faction uses any means necessary to preserve their secrets and anonymity, increasing the suspense as the film endures. While entertaining at most stages, an uninspiring and dull finale leaves the viewer unsatisfied after the closing credits roll. **GK**



MUSIC

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MOGWAI LANDS IN KOREA68

An exclusive interview ahead of their Nov. 30 Korea date

OPEN MIC IN ITAEWON74

Sing your heart out, recite a poem, or just talk

THREE CAN'T MISS SHOWS FOR NOVEMBER72

The premier indie booking agency has lots in store for this month

MOGWAI'S SPACEY ROCK LANDS IN SEOUL

BY SUMMER WALKER

MOGWAI

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW BY
SUMMER WALKER

THIS
IS A NEW
SECTION

The rumors are true. Glaswegian post-rock act, Mogwai will be in Korea for one night only. On November 30th, Super Color Super, promotion company and dreamer-of-the-dream, is hosting the legendary shoe-gazerific band along with local act Vidulgi OoyoO. SCS consistently brings some of the best cutting-edge acts to Seoul, and Mogwai might be the biggest and most exciting artist to come to the city in a long while.

Mogwai have been around since 1995. The current lineup includes: John Cummings on guitar/piano, Stuart Braithwaite on guitar, Martin Bulloch on drums, Barry Burns on piano/guitar, and Dominic Aitchison on bass. Their unique name comes from the film Gremlins and literally means "ghost" in Chinese. They have this to say about it: "It has no significant meaning and we always intended on getting a better one, but like a lot of other things we never got round to it."

After spending a large part of 2010 in the studio recording the album "Hardcore Will Never Die, But You Will", the band has been on a grueling world tour that started in January and has taken them all over the States, Canada and Europe, as well as a few stops in Asia. By the time Groove goes to print, they will have played 105 shows this year alone.

Although their latest EP, "Earth Division", features some vocals, most of what Mogwai put out is instrumental. The guitar-and-recently computer-based songs are described by many as 'math rock' or maybe 'instrumental metal'. "Their compositions have gotten increasingly drawn out and austere over time, sometimes barely more than a single arpeggiated chord or two evolving for ten minutes or more..." (Douglas Wolk, SPIN 1999).

Indeed the band is still evolving. "Earth Division" includes strings throughout the disc, but at its core it is still rock and roll.

*"EVERY BAND SHOULD MATURE LIKE
MOGWAI: STILL INVENTIVE, STILL
CHALLENGING THEMSELVES AND STILL
INSANELY LOUD. " - ROLLING STONE*



IN ANTICIPATION OF THEIR SEOUL DATE, STUART BRAITHWAITE (GUITAR) AGREED TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS FOR GROOVE KOREA.

SUMMER WALKER: How's the tour gone so far? I noticed some dates were canceled for medical reasons. Is everyone OK?

STUART BRAITHWAITE: Yes. Everyone is fine now, thank you.

SW: Your new EP, "Earth Division", seems a bit different from what one would expect from Mogwai. Did these songs come from a different state of mind or perhaps have a different purpose?

SB: When we write and record pieces of music for an album we always try to go in many different directions at once. We feel it works best this way for us to make good albums. The four tracks on the album were written and recorded at the same time as the rest of Hardcore [Will Never Die, But You Will], and whilst they are quite different from each other in various ways, they just seemed to stick together more as a group away from the other tracks that we wanted to release. I think it was the fact that these four had strings on them that made them gel together separately from the other tracks.

SW: After you write and record songs, what is your process for deciding what fits?

SB: Usually the decision is between things that are good enough and things that aren't good enough, then we make them all try to fit by trying them out in different orders. Compiling a track listing can be one of the more surprisingly difficult parts of making an album. In this case, we had too many songs to go on an album but liked all of these ones equally well and there seemed to be a natural division between an album's worth and an EP's worth.

SW: The recent video for the song "Rano Pano" shows two friends embarking on a drunken mission to build a portal to another dimension. It was inspired by 80s VHS tapes and is, according to director Tom Scholefield, "a homage to boyhood fantasies"

Was that an idea that came from you? If so, how did that come about? VHS tapes?

SB: No the idea came from Tom. His mind works in mysterious and sometimes beautiful ways. Like most artists, I'm pretty sure everyone has had boyhood fantasies about girls dressed up like Darth Vader and a Stormtrooper, no?




SW: What's the process for creating a video for songs without lyrics?

Do you feel your songs already have stories that are waiting to be pulled out?

SB: No the songs never have stories. Not any that any of us have ever been brave enough to discuss with each other. I suppose this makes it easier to come up with an idea that fits. It just has to be a good idea. Not all our videos have been that good to be honest.

SW: From a reader, Cain Barriskill: "Ask them about some up and coming Scottish bands to watch out for in the future." Since you have your own label, is that something you can fill us in on?

SB: On our label there are: *Remember Remember* (new album out now), *Errors* (new album finished and out soon) and many others. Check them out here <http://www.rock-action.co.uk/>

Also Scottish and great but not on our label are *The Twilight Sad*, *RM Hubbert* and *The Phantom Band*. There are millions more, get internetting. 

MOGWAI

THE BAND:
STUART BRAITHWAITE (GUITAR), DOMINIC AITCHISON (BASS), MARTIN BULLOCH (DRUMS), JOHN CUMMINGS (GUITAR), BARRY BURNS (KEYS).



SUPER COLOR SUPER IN NOVEMBER

BY LEON AMAYSEN

Regular fans of Super Color Super will not be let down by the collective's November offerings across Korea. For those unfamiliar, Super Color Super is a collective of artists and musicians who are organizing shows and other creative projects across several cities. Trying to bring bands in and also to offer lower-priced shows. Only two years old, they were called the "premier indie booking agency" by the New York Times this summer.

TWO GALLANTS

KOREAN STOPS INCLUDE
CHEONAN, DAEGU, BUSAN AND SEOUL



SUPER SKETCH BUSAN

This little series rears its beautiful head for the first time in Busan after building a steady buzz in Seoul amongst people who love art, music and those who love being mentioned third in lists. Each series in the concert revolves around live music playing while live analog art is performed on old-fashioned classroom projectors. An art market displaying prints, zines and crafts humbles itself sheepishly along the edges of the crowd. Recommended for those looking to shoplift unique works.

Nov. 5, Busan, Club Fabric

2 GALLANTS

Two Gallants are San Francisco Folky folks coming in the fitting shape of two daring young men and a James Joyce reference. Perched somewhere along the indie-folk, blues and punk borders, the duo produces an amazingly well-rounded sound despite their inability to find additional members while touring the entire planet-try Craigslist dudes! Their tour stretches quite expansively for Korea-reaching four cities: Cheonan, Daegu, Busan and Seoul in four days. Recommended for fans of Iron and Wine, Bright Eyes, Fleet Foxes.

Nov. 9, Cheonan, Dolce Bar
Nov. 10, Daegu, Club Urban
Nov. 11, Busan, Vinyl Underground
Nov. 12, Seoul, Club DGBD (Drug)

MOGWAI

A major indication of the rising Korean scene, the Scottish post-rock heavy hitters bring their famously loud and dynamic show to Ax Hall under Super Color Super's direction, after years of courting by Korean labels. Having earned quite a name for themselves in the last ten years, you don't have to look far or listen much to be convinced why you shouldn't miss seeing them to shatter the calm of Seoul. Ear plugs will be made available in the venue. Great for fans of Sigur Ros, Explosions in the Sky, Tortoise, Godspeed You! Black Emperor. See an exclusive interview on page 68. [GK](#)

Nov. 30, Seoul, Ax Hall

*ALL PRE-SALE ENDS THE DAY PRIOR TO SHOW DATE

*NO MINORS ALLOWED TO **TWO GALLANTS**

* NO PROFESSIONAL CAMERAS ALLOWED AT **THE MOGWAI CONCERT**

A COMMUNITY
OF ARTISTS
BY GROOVE KOREA STAFF

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Power couple Fancy and Zilla started the Itaewon Open Mic at Bar Ireland Yuki in the hopes that it would create a community for artists and help them to grow and flourish.

The two come from Atlanta, a city known for its thriving open mics that played host to several stars before they were stars. And it was Fancy and Zilla's love of music and desire to be surrounded by other artists that gave birth to Itaewon Open Mic back in July.

"Music is an important part of our lives," Fancy said. "But in order to grow as an artist, Zilla and I felt that we needed to be around other artists. I could not grow as an artist unless I had support from those who were just as passionate as me about music."

They based Itaewon Open Mic on the types of events they saw in the United States and began promoting it in hopes of attracting artists, writers, producers and designers.

They chose Itaewon as the venue because they felt it was an opportunity to expand the music community from Hongdae to other parts of the city. Also, their love for the Bar Ireland Yuki family helped convince them that it was to be the venue within Itaewon.

"Basically, the bartenders made Ireland Yuki feel like home," she said. "Those guys are so talented and caring, it's hard not to keep coming back. We knew we could trust our family at Ireland Yuki and we could think of no other place we would rather have it."

Bar owner Dio said he was happy to host the event. "I thought it would be fun and would bring in all different kinds of people," he said. And it has. The first event brought in six performers and it has only grown since then. Now the show starts around 9:30 p.m. and runs until about 11:30 p.m. with up to 12 performers. It attracts everyone from rappers to comedians, R&B singers, ballad singers, musicians, hip hop artists and poets.

Hip hop artist Cue the Hiphop has performed several times at Itaewon Open Mic and said it first attracted him as a place where he could

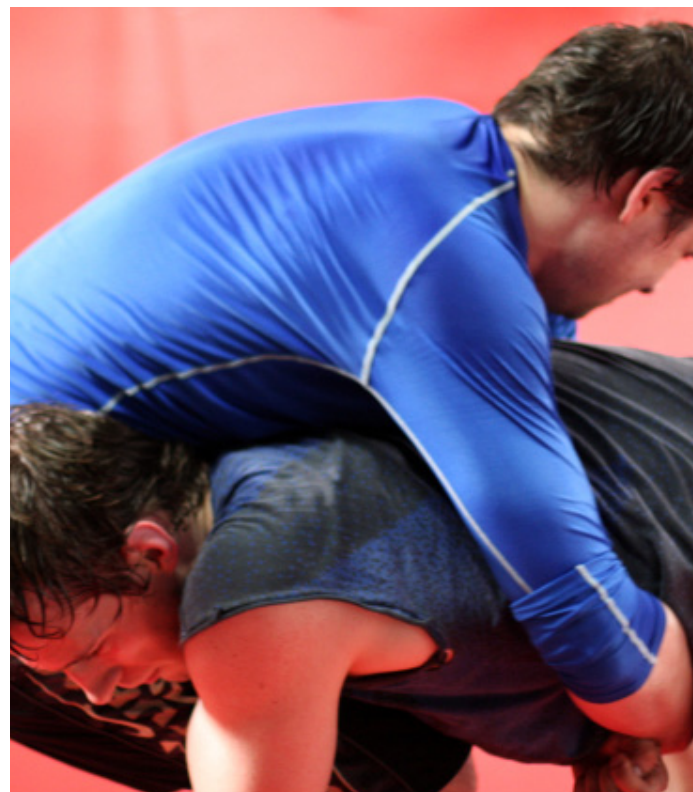
practice performing, share his music and meet other artists. "This is a great way to perform to people and get the feedback that your looking for and its great practice for shows on a larger scale," he said.

Spoken word artist Carys "Matic" Jones said she used to host her own open mic, but joined forces with Fancy and Zilla after performing a few times. She said this open mic differs from others in that there is a sense of camaraderie between the performers and it brings people together. "I've witnessed open mics in Seoul in the past where there's been a lot of rivalry and

tension: The comedians didn't like the poets, the acoustic musicians didn't like the emcees etc. , but there's none of that at the Itaewon Open Mic. Everyone's extremely supportive of each other."

From this, Jones teamed up with Fancy and Zilla to create a new, separate event called "Lyrically Minded," an event hosted by Jones specifically for spoken word artists, since there has yet to be an event specifically for these artists. So far, they've held two shows at the Orange Tree in Haebangcheon with more planned in the future.

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HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY MIND77
Body and Seoul center has programs tailored for everyone

A DENTIST FOR ALL SEASONS78
SMart Dental grows its reputation on quality, communication

THIS
IS A NEW
SECTION

PERSEVERE, DEFEND AND MAKE FRIENDS

BY GROOVE KOREA STAFF

"ANYONE WHO JOINS SHOULD NOT FEEL INTIMIDATED AND THE MORE
ADVANCED STUDENTS ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO SHARE THEIR
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WITH THE BEGINNERS."

It was a major decision made on a whim that changed Anna Desmarais' life. Before she opened Body & Seoul Martial Arts and Fitness Center in Seoul a year-and-a-half ago, Desmarais had noticed that there were no gyms in the Itaewon area that offered Muay Thai or MMA.

"So I just decided to open my own! I found some great instructors and a great little space, and it just sort of materialized," said Desmarais, who moonlights as a voice actor, DJ, and co-owner the popular restaurant/lounge bar Berlin in Itaewon.

The hardest part was cultivating the ideal environment to train in, which included having to get rid of some of the ego that often comes with martial arts gyms. **"I can honestly say that the people who train at Body & Seoul are a friendly bunch and check their ego at the door,"** she said. **"Anyone who joins should not feel intimidated and the more advanced students are always willing to share their knowledge and skills with the beginners."**

Body and Seoul Martial Arts and Fitness Center has a stellar reputation amongst expats. Desmarais attributes that to quality instruction in a fun, relaxed environment. Its members also see and feel results quickly - usually in a matter of a couple of weeks, in fact.

"So it encourages them to keep at it," said the 30-something year old. **"Also, most people who join our gym and stick with it become close friends with each other and, in turn, encourage their other friends to join, so word spreads quickly."**

Body and Seoul Martial Arts and Fitness Center offers classes in all sorts of disciplines. One day a member could train in *Muay Thai*, and the next, stretch it all out in a yoga class. Classes are offered in *Muay Thai* (kickboxing), grappling (*no-gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu*), *MMA*, *yoga*, *Pilates*, *Krav Maga*, and circuit training.

There are also private lessons and personal training. The center has close ties with a chiropractic/treatment massage facility, nutritionist, and physiotherapist, as well as help in organizing and promoting kickboxing and MMA events.

Classes are offered in English, but there are plans in the works to offer classes in Korean.

There's more to it than physical fitness. **"Besides all the scientific facts proving that exercise makes you happier and healthier, I think that martial arts and yoga give you so much more,"** said Desmarais. **"You also gain confidence and mental fortitude."**

You learn how to persevere. You learn how to defend yourself. And there's also that sense of camaraderie that is often lacking at traditional gyms."

Classes are offered at all times of the day, including early in the morning, late at night, and all day on Saturdays.

But being busy is no excuse for Desmarais. **"I believe that you have to make time to work out, since it's so important for your health. The nice thing about learning a martial art is that you can make it your workout. There's no need to go to a regular gym if you train in a martial art, since the cardio and strength training is built right in."**

The center has big projects on the go, including expanding to a bigger facility to provide more amenities and equipment. Desmarais, originally from New Hampshire and Michigan, is half Korean and has been in Korea for a decade 10 years.

BODY & SEOUL MARTIAL ARTS AND FITNESS CENTER IS LOCATED AT THE
INTERSECTION OF KYUNGNI DAN AND HAEBANGCHON.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.seoulmartialarts.com>

INFO

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SMart DENTAL

SEX UP YOUR SMILE

BY GROOVE KOREA STAFF

When Duncan Johnson has a problem in his mouth, he said he's had problems over the years finding a dentist he could count on. It's not necessarily the money that's his top consideration, as much as quality and communication.

"I've been here for a good decade now, and I have been to some dentists that either know what they're doing, or can speak English well, but rarely do you find someone who speaks well and solves all my problems." the English teacher said.

According to a survey conducted at the 2010 Global Information Fair by SMart Dental, foreign patients who live in Korea reported that the biggest problem they faced when seeking medical services was lack of communication by doctors and dentists.

SMart Dental only opened its doors last year, but it's already gaining a reputation amongst the expat community – partly because of its English-speaking staff and America-trained dentist.

The man in charge, Kim Jong-yub, earned his dentist license in 1996. After getting his license, he had oral surgery training in Korea and four years of prosthodontics training at Boston University; he also taught dental students and residents for a year at the same institution.

According to SMart Dental, Dr. Kim is one of the few dentists around who finished oral surgery and prosthodontics at the same time. He prides himself on understanding the limitations of surgery and finding solutions on the restorative end.

"Most of my return patients say I explain things very well and really consider all the options including no treatment before I start the treatments," he said.

A few of the services he offers are implants, dentures, crowns and extractions.

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Kim says he stays sharp by keeping his eyes open and **"saying OK. I'm trying to be honest to all my patients,"** he said.

SMart Dental was the first facility in Korea to use a digital impression system (i-Tero from CADENT, United States). Kim also lectures about digital dentistry, implant dentistry and others topics at universities in Korea and around the world more than 70 times a year.

Kim was the recipient of the 2011 ICOI (International congress of Oral Implantologists) World Congress oral presentation, where he presented Onestep Implant treatment.

Unsurprisingly, for him one of the most important parts of the body is the mouth. **"People who have lost the function of their teeth would be without much of life's fun. I'm happy to help my patients eat and smile,"** he said.

For more information on **SMart Dental** visit their web site at:

<http://smart-dental.co.kr> or call (02) 51-SMART (76278).

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SCHOOL OF HOPE PART II - MABIL ISLAND82 Expat group improves the health, education of this island's stateless

AUSTCHAM IN KOREA - AWARDS84 Chamber hosts annual Business Awards gala dinner on Nov. 10



SCHOOL OF HOPE PART II

Expat group improves the health, education of this island's stateless inhabitants.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY NORMAN VAN DER POLL

The elements are kind to a lazing Mabul. Sunshine abounds, people relax in designer swimwear, balancing an array of expensive technology on their laps, sipping tropical drinks while pondering an early lunch.

Within sight of the Wi-Fi hotspots, a little boy crouches on "his" beach, getting ready to take a crude dump in the faces of the visitors ... his back is turned to the crowd in contempt of the displayed wealth, crouching and displaying ribs exposed by hunger.

Crude wording? Not so crude when you visit Mabul and experience the plight of the Bajau Laut who have fled from their native Philippines. Their neighbours, on this tiny patch of grace are the Suluk Muslims, just as needy yet less nomadic.

Mabul boasts a fair trade to the affording few. Several diver-friendly resorts serve the needs of

visiting divers wanting to experience muck diving first hand, while several retailers on the Suluk side of the island revert to trading as a means to make ends meet. Semporna, a small bustling port, is a 45-minute boat ride away and most, if not all amenities are shipped to the island by various "shipping companies" indigenous to Mabul.

Wandering around the island, one comes across a huge primary school, complete with colourful hibiscus shrubs, palm trees and official signage ... this comes as a shock as one considers the hype around the tiny School of Hope. Talking to locals it soon becomes clear that there are two kinds of citizens inhabiting Mabul: the haves and the have-nots, viz, those with birth certificates and those without birth certificates.

Children with birth certificates are legal and may live on the island (on land, that is), may attend the school and have the right to live.



SULUK MUSLIMS ... THEIR NEIGHBOURS ARE THE SULUK MUSLIMS. JUST AS NEEDY YET LESS NOMADIC.



RUSTIC HOUSE ... MOST OF THE INHABITANTS OF MABUL ISLAND ARE STATELESS.



HOPE ... HOPE REMAINS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE VOCABULARY OF ALL INVOLVED IN THIS SMALL COMMUNITY.

THE RECENTLY HELD MMW, OR MABUL MARINE WEEK, INVOLVED MOST RESORT OPERATORS INDIGENOUS TO MABUL, AND WAS A HUGE SUCCESS DURING WHICH THE ISLAND WAS CLEANED UP. A STAGGERING 15 TONS OF WASTE WAS REMOVED. "THE ISLAND IS CLEAN NOW," STANLEY SAYS. "LET'S HOPE WE CAN KEEP IT THAT WAY."

Photographers less interested in portraying their credits with their pictures are talking to the world through the lenses of their cameras, in many cases capturing the hunger in the eyes of their subjects. Scuba divers from all walks of life are each, in various fields, contributing on many levels to alleviate sadness and to bring about change. Doctors and nurses are vaccinating children against both real threats and imagined viruses, and yet, the plight remains on a steady course: have or have-not.

"We postpone death by living, by suffering, by error, by risking, by giving and by losing" (Anaïs Nin). We have options and choices, because we have rights. Hope Worldwide (Malaysia) aims to bring in a Health and Education Program to help the stateless children from Mabul.

Log on to www.SoScuba.com or blog.hopewww.org.my/2011/08/2011-mabul-children-welfare-initiative.html to check out how you can contribute to this noble cause. Dates are between 26 November and 01 December 2011, although helping is not just restricted to this little window.

GK

AN OLD MAN ... PREPARES HIS FISHING NET





AUSTCHAM YEAR OF FRIENDSHIP 2011 BUSINESS AWARDS CELEBRATES AUSTRALIA-KOREA BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP


The Australian Chamber of Commerce in Korea (AustCham) will hold its annual Business Awards gala dinner, the social event of the year for the Korean and Australian business communities, on November 10, 2011 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Seoul at 6:30 p.m.

Nine finalist companies, five of which are Korean, are vying for the coveted awards of Best SME, Best Services Company and Trade Excellence. In addition, a special Investment of the Year Award and the Chairman's Award will be announced on the night of the gala dinner. According to AustCham Chairman Jim Lim, "This year's event highlights Australia and Korea's longstanding friendship while recognising exceptional contributors to the ever-expanding Australia-Korea business partnership."

Companies competing for the first three awards are Barun Law, Macquarie Securities, Pure Commerce, BeMode/Bora, Incoaching, Ingeus, Blackmores, Botany and ComPacks.

The awards will be sponsored by a range of leading organisations including ANZ Bank, Austrade, Macquarie Group of Companies, Korea, Rio Tinto, Hyatt Seoul, Chevron, POSCO and law firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth, with Meat and Livestock Australia generously providing the meat.

In an exciting new development promoting audience participation, Telston will introduce SMS voting for one of the awards.

The prestigious black-tie event will be attended by prominent Korean and Australian business figures and community leaders. In the spirit of the Year of Friendship between Korea and Australia, the dinner will feature a superb four-course menu with Korean touches accompanied by fine Australian wines, a display of beautiful flowers from both countries and an eye-catching fashion show by award finalist Bora, a designer famous in both Australia and Korea. 

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✉ AUSTCHAMKOREA@GMAIL.COM

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☎ 02-734-2734
✉ ABIGAIL.NAH@EDGECOMMS.NET

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~Incoming Wire Receiver**

Dear incoming wire receiver,

It is very simple to receive money from overseas into your Korean won (or multi-currency) bank account.

The remitter (the person sending the money) will need the following information to send money to you in Korea:

- Receiving bank info (your bank's info)
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- The receiving bank's branch name
- The receiving bank's address (can either be your bank branch's address or your bank's head office address)
- The receiving bank's SWIFT code:
- Recipient info (your personal account information)
- Recipient's name
- Recipient's phone number
- Recipient's address (in Korea)
- Recipient's email address - Recipient's bank account number

Fees will vary by bank. At Shinhan, for example, there is no inward remittance fee if the amount received is less than \$100 (or equivalent). The fee is 10,000 won if the amount received is greater than or equal to \$100. Please note that the remitter (person sending the money) will be charged outward remittance fees from the bank that they are sending the money from.

There is no limit to the amount of inward overseas remittance you can receive. Depending on the purpose of that money though, you might have to report it to the appropriate entity. For example, if you want to use that money to buy stocks you have to report it to the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS). If you want to use that money to buy a house, you have to report it to the government office in the local "gu" (district) or "si" (city) where the property is located. If that money is for a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), you have to report it to KOTRA or to the bank. If you ever want to be able to send that money back overseas, you must report it correctly when you first bring it in.

When the money arrives at your bank in Korea, it will not be automatically deposited into your account. A teller will notify you that your money has arrived and may ask you the purpose of the funds. Remember, you must be sure to report the purpose of incoming funds if there is a chance that you will ever want to send the money back out of the country in the future.

Best wishes,

Michelle Farnsworth

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Foreign Client Relationship
Manager

Shinhan Bank
Foreign Customer Department
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Seoul 100-102 Korea

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Fax: 02-2151-2878
Mob: 010-4788-1991

Email: farnsworth@shinhan.com

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← Behind the Hamilton Hotel
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 ☎ 02-796-1660

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 ☎ 02-794-6888

ITAEWON AMERICAN

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← 1F-628-1, Hannam-Dong, Yongsan Gu, Seoul
 ☎ Daily 11:00am - 10:00Pm
 🚗 LINE # 6 Hangangjin Stn. (Brown Line) - Exit 1
 ☎ 070-4190-3642

ITAEWON AMERICAN

BERLIN

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 ☎ 02-795-9711

HONGDAE HONEY BOWL

BRUNCH

← 410-21, Hapjeong-dong, Mapo-gu
 ☎ Weekdays 5:00pm - 1:00am Weeknights
 🚗 LINE # 2 Hapjeong Stn. (Green Line) - Exit 6
 ☎ 070-7012-4550

HONGDAE CZECH

CASTLE PRAHA

← 395-19, Seogyo-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul
 ☎ Mon-Sat 4:00pm - 1:00am, Sundays Closed
 🚗 LINE # 2 Hondae Stn. (Green Line) - Exit 9
 ☎ 02-344-2121

HONGDAE BURGERS

THE JOE

← 345-30 Seogyo-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul
 ☎ 11:00am - 10:00pm
 🚗 LINE # 2 Hongdae Stn. (Green Line) - Exit 9
 ☎ 070-4156-5522

SINCHON MEXICAN

CHOIS TACOS

← 13-27 Changcheon-dong, Seodaemun-gu
 ☎ Daily 11:00am - 11:00pm
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The Project, Vincent Lombardi College
 Founder, and Catholic Church

It is necessary to track the frequency of training as well as the frequency and the association of words.

off. This is the kind of thing that
that's a package, and it's used to
able for the first time distribute
and keep it tight and also makes
even faster to choose quality,
in fact.

MONEY
louisa

mine

2011-11-19 Sat



NEXT
MONTH'S
CHALLENGE
iLIQUID!

1

"SUNSET SURFERS"

PHOTOGRAPED BY: JEAN PEAL DEACON

The last of the summers warm sun slowly sets over Banghwa bridge allowing one last opportunity for these windsurfers to get wet...bring on the ice skaters!



2

"THE LIGHT AT
THE END"

PHOTOGRAPED BY:
CARLY CLINE



3

"VIKING"

PHOTOGRAPED BY:
BRAD CHURCH

The Groove SPC Challenge

The SPC is an online community of expats in Korea who are interested in learning about and discussing the art of photography. But 'Seoul Photo Club' is a bit of a misnomer - membership is free to anyone, anywhere in Korea.

Together with Groove Korea we run the photo competition. Each month, a themed challenge is announced in Groove Korea and at tWhe SPC. Past themes include such topics as Repetition, The Sun and Spring Portrait. Just submit your interpretation at the SPC or via email to have a shot at having your pic published here in Groove Korea and winning the monthly prize.

You must provide your name and contact details plus a 50-150 word description telling us the what/where/when of the photo. Entries must be at least 2,000 pixels on the longest side and 300dpi to meet printing requirements, and be taken no more than two weeks prior to the announcement of the challenge.

For further info, visit the
Seoul Photo Club on Flickr
www.flickr.com/groups/seoulphotoclub

THE WINNER WILL RE-
CEIVE A FOOD OR EN-
TERTAINMENT VOUCH-

"KONGLISH" OF THE MONTH



The winner receives a food
or entertainment vouch-

er worth

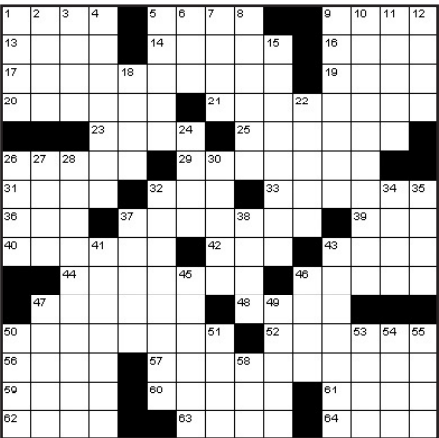
50,000

Please email your entries to:
submissions@groovekorea.com

This Month's Winner - Jeff Kenamer

ENTERTAINMENT

CROSSWORD and SUDOKU



Across
1 Little devils
5 Friends in France
9 Part of the foot
13 Plant anchorer
14 Made common cause (with)
16 Qatar's capital
17 Prelude to pasta, perhaps
19 Tune for two
20 Syrian city
21 Liberality
23 Mata —
25 Gibes
26 Milk dispenser
29 One of the Windward

Islands
31 Hammer part
32 Milne marsupial
33 Grasping
36 — mode
37 Dressed down
39 Bauxite, for example
40 Unrighteous
42 Among, in poetry
43 Food fish
44 "The Dance" painter
46 Cars
47 Rum cocktail
48 Dramatic word for the Yankees?
50 Bay of Naples resort
52 Six-stringed

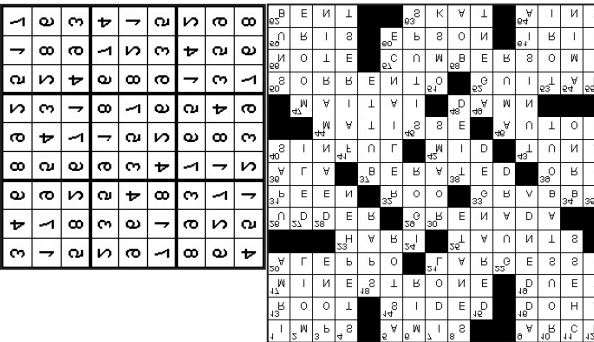
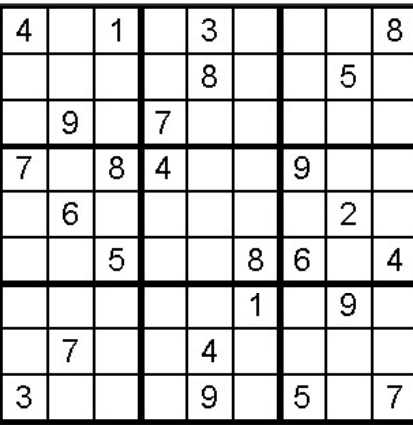
instrument
56 Distinction
57 Unwieldy
59 "Mila 18" novelist
60 Computer printer maker
61 Bearded bloomer
62 Crooked
63 32-card card game
64 Isn't informal?

Down
1 1963 Shirley MacLaine role
2 Drudgery
3 Corn bread
4 Songwriter Sondheim
5 Fur-trading tycoon
6 Cosmonauts' space station
7 False god
8 Governing body
9 Back-of-the-book list
10 Circus hand
11 Karpov's game
12 Can't stand
15 Nuts
18 Nautical pole
22 Protect
24 Composer Stravinsky
26 Poison-bearing tree
27 Cold-cuts emporium
28 Rat Pack member
30 Gads about
32 Trust
34 Chief city of Moravia
35 Pro votes
37 Montana city
38 Even
41 Most equitable
43 North African state
45 Some exercises

HOW TO PLAY

The aim of the puzzle is to insert numbers in the boxes to satisfy only one condition: each row, column and 3x3 box must contain one of each digit from 1-9.

There is a unique solution, which can be found by logical thinking.



BACK PAIN? GET RESULTS!

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REVIEWS

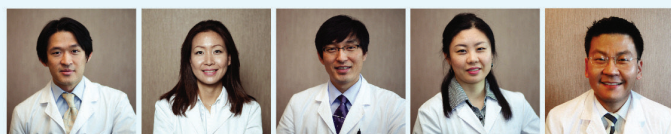
Dr. Dan has effectively relieved me of my chronic back pain when countless medications, needless examinations and procedures couldn't... I'm a believer.
- July '10 GROOVE Magazine

I was particularly impressed by the intimate, personal attention I received and the resulting 'pampered' feeling... I've yet to experience a masseuse whose technique was so gentle, intuitive, and clearly effective... The overall experience left me feeling loose, relaxed and rejuvenated.
- December '09 Seoul Style

SWC not only provides excellent treatment for various health issues but it provides superior CARE.
- Matt, Ilson

Without a doubt the best massages I've had in my life!
- Dawn, Seoul

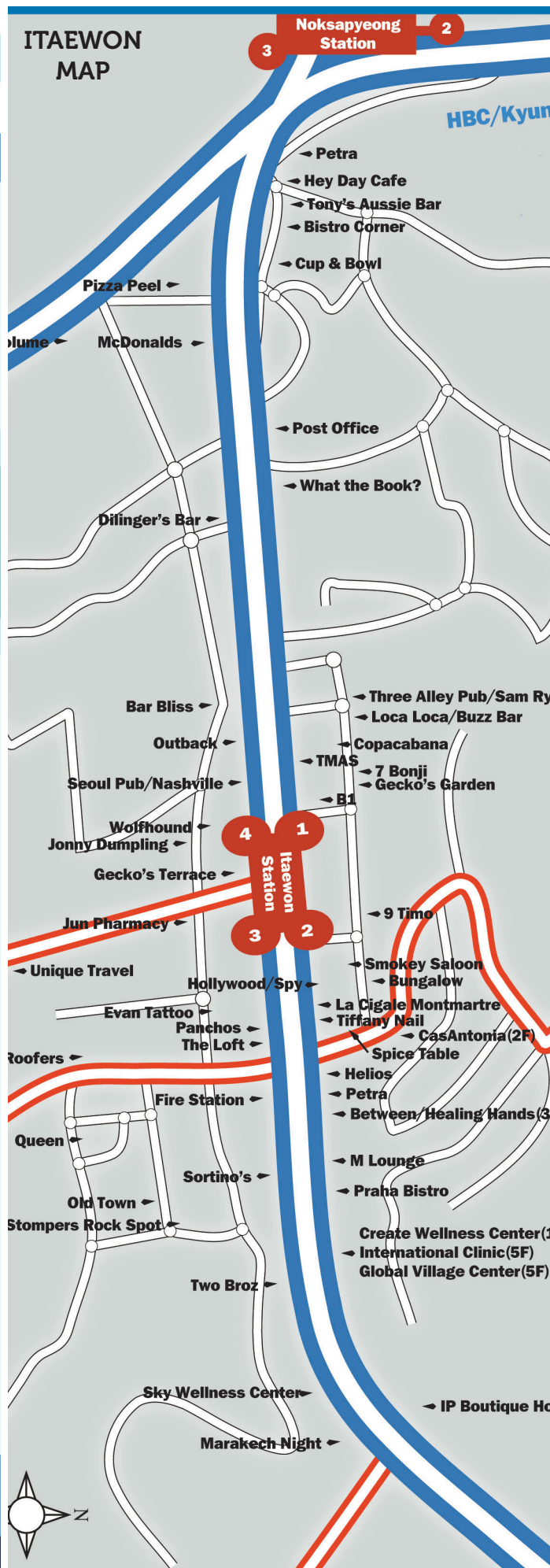
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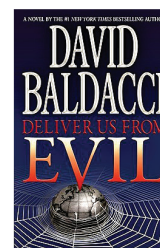
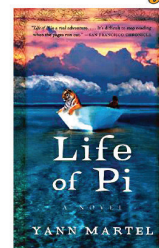
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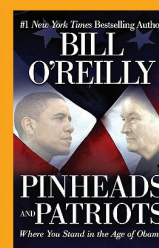
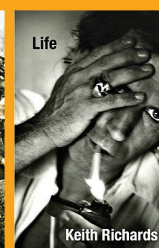
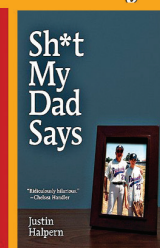
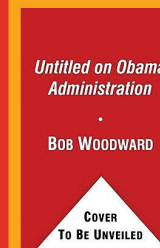
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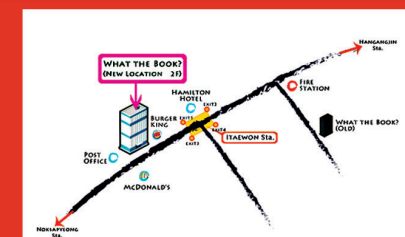
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Horoscope

Aries

You may not know what to do with the brilliant ideas that pop into your head today. Ironically, friends and coworkers become less convinced that your approach will work the more you try to explain it. They may agree with your position, but they're not sure that you can transform your clever strategy into a practical plan. It won't help to ramble on about what you will do. Save your long speeches for another time; for now, lead with actions rather than words.

Taurus

You believe that you're being very realistic, but you probably won't have such a firm grip on reality today. At first you may persuade others that you're in control, but you are more likely to confuse them as you contradict yourself later on. Although you're able to explain a complicated concept now, it's more challenging to just give simple directions. Be smart and let someone else temporarily hold the reins of control.

Gemini

Your key planet Mercury is in its trickster mode today as it squares irrational Neptune. You may try to think clearly, but it's challenging to finish sentences when your ideas float off into the mists of illusion and fantasy. Remember your analytical process is muddled now, so don't be overly certain about what you know. Wait a couple of days before reconsidering your options.

Cancer

You may be better off today by remaining as silent as possible. If you avoid saying too much, you can come out of a tangled emotional web appearing as if you are a real hero. Although it could be difficult to see both sides of a conflict now, you still realize that there's no single straightforward solution. Pretending to have the answer will probably just create disappointment; your wisest strategy is to wait it out. If you have something crucial to add to the discussion, it will be even more relevant in a day or two.

Leo

It's very reassuring when your personal goals are consistent with your actual duties at work. However, it can be quite disconcerting now if they're not. Your current situation may be complicated by a friend or business partner who isn't communicating clearly. If you're trying to finalize a decision, it would be better to have the support of those around you. Be patient; others will begin to cooperate more in the days ahead.

Virgo

This can be an unusual but exciting day when you're more inclined to tell a story or write a poem than act in a fully rational manner. You want everyone to acknowledge how clever you are, but it isn't easy to concentrate on details today. Don't set yourself up for failure by trying to deliver something beyond your current capability. Give yourself permission to lose yourself in a daydream; you can always return to your work tomorrow.

Libra

Your sign of The Scales symbolizes your commitment to seeking balance, even when it's elusive. You might end up spinning your wheels today if you think you can use logic to find the calm center of the storm. But you won't re-establish your center of gravity by keeping still; instead of sitting in a yoga pose, imagine that you are a figure skater in motion. Your easy grace arises from being one with the flow rather than trying to cling to the status quo.

Scorpio

Conversations open up this month, dear Scorpio, and you stand to either make a new connection that lasts in the long term, or to enhance the bond of an existing one. Nev-

ertheless, you can be rather withdrawn until mid-month as you prepare for a new astrological year and build up your energy reserves.

Career matters are fast-paced, stimulating, and sometimes rocky this month, as bosses can be demanding. You may need to watch what you say around the 26-27th. Personal charisma runs high, however, and love matters are strong.

Sagittarius

You can turn a rather mundane day into an exciting one as long as you don't attempt to resolve the dualistic way you approach life today. On one hand, you're thinking like an analytical scientist, carefully observing your current situation in a cool and detached manner. But on the other hand, you're like an artist, directly engaging your experiences by responding with a wide spectrum of emotions. Each method has something of value to offer, so tune in to your head and your heart at the same time without closing down either one.

Capricorn

You want to believe that your instincts won't steer you wrong because the Moon is back in your pragmatic sign. However, you may have temporarily lost your ability to separate threads that are spun in your imagination from those that are woven with reality. Normally you are a champ at keeping fact and fiction distinct, yet now the fabric of life contains both. Don't overanalyze what's happening; just appreciate the magic of what you can create.

Aquarius

You are motivated to communicate the recent vague visions you've been having, but the more you try to describe them, the less others understand. Your thoughts are elusive and cannot easily fit into words, unless you have a particular spiritual discipline that helps you to frame your experience. Awakening your inner artist, poet or mystic, however, can help you explain the subtleties of your current perspective.

Pisces

Logical Mercury is forming a creative square with your ruling planet Neptune, opening your imagination to realities that exist beyond the realm of language. This can be very confusing if you want to be specific in your communication today. Unfortunately, even the most basic ideas are slippery now. Instead of increasing your frustration by trying to manage too many details, put this kind of work off until tomorrow when your concentration returns.



Back Pain?

Do You Have Any of the Following Conditions?

- Lower Back Pain
- Muscle spasm or strains
- Bulging lumbar discs
- Numbness or soreness in your legs
- Shooting hip or thigh pain

Back pain is **NOT**
"just a part of life"
and
something you have to live with.

Normany K. Seoul Foreign School
"Great chiropractic & massage services. I like how I can drop by anytime & on Sundays as well".

Rusty K. Expat in Korea
"Dr. Lee fixed my hip pain and didn't push me to come back more than I neede."

You might not be able to exercise, work, or even sit in the subway for a 30 minute ride. It's almost impossible for anyone around you to understand how you feel. You can't remember the last time you even had a restful night's sleep. You've got too many dreams left undone to let back pain slow you down. Too many special moments waiting to be experienced.

My name is Dr. James Lee, Chief Clinician at Create Wellness Center in Itaewon. Over the past 12 years since we've opened the doors, We've seen hundreds of people with back pain leave the office pain free. Because I've seen it with my own eyes, I strongly believe...Back pain is NOT "just a part of life" and something you have to live with.

Here's what some of the top medical researchers had to say about chiropractic... "Manipulation [chiropractic adjustments], with or without exercise, improved symptoms more than medical care did after both 3 and 12 months." - British Medical Journal

"Chiropractor's manipulation of the spine was more helpful than any of the following: traction, massage, biofeedback, acupuncture, injection of steroids into the spine and back corsets, and ultrasound." -- Stanley Bigos, MD, Professor of Orthopedic Surgery

This means in just a matter of weeks you could be back playing your favorite sport, enjoying your love life, or traveling again.

For this month only, I'm running a very special offer where you can find out how much this amazing treatment can help your back pain.

What does this offer include? Everything I normally do in my new patient evaluation for only 39,000won.

Just call before November 30th and here's what you'll get...

An in-depth consultation about your health and well-being where I will listen...really listen...to the details of your case. A complete neuromuscular examination, full set of specialized digital x-rays (if necessary), and a thorough analysis of your exam and x-ray findings so we can start mapping out your plan to being pain free.

You'll get to see everything first hand and find out if this amazing treatment will be your back pain solution, like it has been for so many other patients.

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